

# Modern Journalism

BY A  
LONDON EDITOR

*With a Preface*  
*by*  
GEORGE R. SIMS

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~~A. Castell~~





MODERN JOURNALISM



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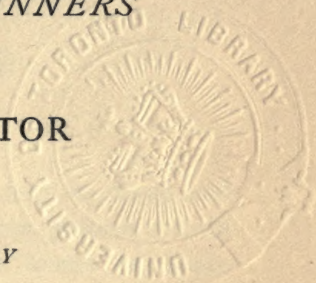
# MODERN JOURNALISM

*A GUIDE FOR BEGINNERS*

BY

A LONDON EDITOR

*WITH A PREFACE BY  
GEORGE R. SIMS*



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## PREFACE



THE journalist, unlike the poet, may be made and not born, but he must, nevertheless, possess certain inborn qualifications before he starts to make himself, or to be made.

There must be a foundation on which to build. That foundation is the natural ability to convey an idea clearly in a well-balanced sentence. Given that, the whole art of journalism may be acquired by any young man who is willing to concentrate all the other qualifications he may possess upon the art of writing, not to please himself, but to interest other people.

The journalism of to-day is very different from the journalism of our fathers.

As a profession it has become at once more exacting, more exhausting, more lucrative and more distinguished. The prizes are greater, and the fame far more reaching.

Every young man who adopts the profession of journalism does not, like the soldiers of Napoleon, carry a field-marshal's baton in his knapsack.

But the young man with the given qualifications, who is willing to place his art first, and to devote himself loyally to it, may attain sufficient honour and reward to satisfy a modest ambition.

I have read this excellent little book, *Modern Journalism*, with the greatest interest, and though I have been a journalist for the greater part of my life, I have found in it much that has instructed me, and much that has impressed me.

If I were asked to add a personal note to these few words of introduction, I should say to the young journalist—take, as far as you possibly can, a personal interest in your work ; be proud of the profession you have adopted, and zealous for its honour ; never use a long word when a short one will do, or a foreign word when an English one is at your service ; eschew the parenthesis, and cleave unto the full stop. And however much you may be tempted in the beginning to imitate the style of this writer or of that, never forget that your greatest chance of success as a journalist lies in your having a style of your own.

GEO. R. SIMS.



## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

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AMONG the developments of our own time there is perhaps not one that has been at once so enormous in extent and so far reaching in influence as the progress of modern journalism. Beginning at first as the mere recorder of news, from which the reader was able to deduce his own conclusions as to the events immediately occurring, the newspaper has by steady steps advanced to the position of formulating in more cases than not the opinions of the community among which it circulates. Instead of merely stating facts and incidents it has, rightly or wrongly, obtained the power of becoming not only the mouthpiece of the public but the leader of movements and the pleader of earnest causes. Nor has this development been allowed to take place with any serious objection on the part of the readers. A few isolated cases have been known of a protest against the "tyranny of the press," and perhaps of all the dangers to which the journalism of to-day is exposed this is especially the gravest, and one which eventually will have to be seriously reckoned with.

But inasmuch as the fetters which restrain the expansion of journalism are, and for many years have been, of the slenderest ; and since the public welcomes the coming of some new thing and of a fresh manner of its appearance, the greatest encouragement has been held out to promoters, editors, and journalists themselves. And this has led to changes and methods the like of which could never have been contemplated even fifty years ago. Furthermore, the spread of education everywhere, and its extraordinary progress in special spheres, have given a demand for periodical literature of all kinds, which much mental ingenuity on the one hand and improved machinery and methods of production on the other have readily supplied. The old journals have become for the most part moribund or deceased : the older journalism has been scrap-heaped with the equally old-fashioned type and machinery. Strenuousness has taken the place of dignity, a relentless search for the "newest news" without limitation, irrespective of persons or things, has ousted the cautious reserve and the regard for suitability which dominated the journalism of our fathers.

Since the plea of human interest was made the basis of the newer journals, a wider interest was taken, with increased circulations resulting therefrom. This necessarily opened up more opportunities in an interesting and honourable profession,



and many who would have been attracted by other channels of activity found themselves impelled towards one or other branches of work in connection with the gathering, production, or distribution of such matter as finds a place in the columns of the daily, weekly, or monthly journals of to-day. The fascination which journalism shares with the stage in its attractiveness for certain natures plentifully endowed with imaginative qualities and a love of adventure need not be inquired into here: it is sufficient to state the bare fact. Every profession is overcrowded nowadays, but few receive more aspirants than journalism. In many cases, though not all, success failed to come to the unfortunate ones less through inability than from a lack of knowledge regarding the ways and means. Enthusiasm—so essential in all professions, but pre-eminently in this—there was in abundance, but there was close by no hand to guide that enthusiasm into the right roads which lead ultimately to the desired goal. As aiming to show just how to begin in journalism, and what are the chances of remuneration and advancement which it holds out, this volume, the outcome of much experience as journalist, author, and editor, may be appreciated by those for whom it has been written. It must be taken not solely as representing the writer's own opinions, but as bearing the endorsement of some of the most experienced

and capable journalists of the present day. If it shall serve to assist on their way those who recognise their fitness for the profession which makes the greatest demands on mind and body, while at the same time it may cause others to recognise at an early stage their unsuitability for work of so urgent a kind, it will have succeeded in its object as affecting the contributor, and simultaneously save the precious time of the already overworked and harassed modern editors of our contemporary press.

LONDON, *November* 1909.

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# MODERN JOURNALISM



## CHAPTER I

### THE MAKING OF A JOURNALIST

APART altogether from your own personal desire, what elementary qualifications should set you apart from the rest of mankind as one fitted for the office and work of a journalist ?

A good education, good health, considerable patience and determination—these essentials are shared by other professions as well as journalism. But the journalist, besides possessing these endowments, must primarily have that instinct for information, that “nose for news,” as it has been aptly expressed, without which he is pursuing a calling for which he is unfitted. He is the man who can read sermons in stones ; who in the dullest incidents and topics can see first-rate copy lurking in unsuspected places. That is the first of all qualifications which he should possess. More than even the actor he must put himself out of the question and sink his own personality in the part he is

called upon to play. The most frequent mistake which a novice makes is to select such a theme as is pleasing to himself and then to write on that, forgetting all the time that journals are published not for the benefit of contributors but readers.

I am using the word journalist in its widest and broadest sense to denote a person whose work it is to supply matter for the literary columns of the press. One day's experience in an editor's office teaches you that that matter must be of exactly such a nature as the public is anxious to have given them. Far more than the actor just mentioned you are the servant of the public, and without the accompanying doubtful advantage of being hero-worshipped ; since, except in signed articles, your name is not known. You are just one of the cogs that drive the great printing-press round, and you spend your time, as has been said more than once, in helping to make every one else's reputation but your own.

"All art is selection," said a distinguished man years ago. This is true of every art that exists. The painter in making the composition of his picture selects from the panorama of nature certain hills and plateaus : the dramatist and novelist in working out their stories select from the men and women of the world just those few beings which are appropriate for their immediate task. It is only in their mode of selection that the painter and dramatist show their skill. There is nature everywhere, there are men and women around us in every street



and in every dwelling : but the secret of the art is to know which bit of nature to paint and how to treat it, which man to choose for your hero, which woman to choose in subtle contrast so as to allow of the fullest and clearest action through which to express character.

So it is with the journalist. His chiefest art lies in selection. The clever journalist is known by his ability to separate the chaff from the wheat, the human interest from the dull. He will look on events and people not in regard to themselves but after the manner in which they are likely to appeal to his readers. Walking down Piccadilly you may notice a poorly-clad creature wandering along the gutter bearing a sandwich board on his shoulders. There is nothing particularly exciting about this beggar man as such. But supposing you learn that the beggar is really a sportsman doing it for a wager, or a peer who has fallen on hard times, the appearance of that ragged man suddenly has to you an entirely altered appearance. You instinctively get him to tell you his life-story, and, unless you make a complete hash of the chance offered, it is good for at least a quarter of a column for the page of your paper next morning, with a suitable heading to herald it. At least nine-tenths of your readers will be interested, for there is more sympathy of a sort even in the greediest humanity than is popularly suspected, and if postal orders of half a crown and ten shillings do not come rushing in from kindly disposed readers in the suburbs and provinces within the next twenty-

four hours of publication, it will be out of the ordinary.

Nor is it enough to have a "nose for news." The journalist must have more than a literary bias—he must be able to dish up that incident of the beggar according to the exact taste of his readers. The *Star*, for instance, would not deal with it in the same manner as the *Morning Post* and the *Times*. Whilst the two latter might give it an obscure position in highly condensed form, the former would treat it probably in fuller detail and with sufficient prominence to make it sensational. The *Daily Mirror* might improve on it by giving a photograph of the beggar-aristocrat in the act of carrying his sandwich board, and in the same week it might appear in the illustrated weeklies, only to be dished up a year or two after in an illustrated article in one of the monthlies on "Peers who are Paupers." Part of the beggar's story would be useless for purposes of publication: certain life-incidents would not be wanted for the journalist's paper. It would be in adapting, restraining, and, I fear, according to the canons of many modern papers, exaggerating the facts so as to get at the actuality of the story that the journalist would show how much or how little ability he had in him.

Again, he must be able to estimate the comparative value of news. Let us suppose he is entrusted with the "make-up" of a newspaper. It has been an exciting night. No end of excellent copy has been pouring in from all

over the world and from London and the provinces especially. Parliament is sitting and the season is at its highest. Among the many items of information which have filtered in are the following :—

CONSCRIPTION ABOLISHED IN GERMANY.

APPALLING COLLISION BETWEEN THE *DREAD-NOUGHT* AND THE *MAURETANIA*.

BURGLARY AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

ASSASSINATION OF THE PRIME MINISTER.

MANSION HOUSE BURNED DOWN.

WAR DECLARED BETWEEN THE U.S.A. AND JAPAN.

DISCOVERY, IN A DEVONSHIRE VILLAGE, OF A FORGOTTEN PICTURE BY RAPHAEL.

The capable journalist will, according to the class of paper for which he is responsible, know how to apportion to each item of news the right prominence and length without allowing his own feelings and interest to run away with him. Without straining the effect too much at the expense of the other items of news, a journal in a seaport town, for instance, would naturally give all the prominence to the collision between the *Dreadnought* and the *Mauretania*. The same journal would be less inclined to devote much space to the finding of a Raphael. Perhaps if one were responsible for the make-up of such a paper as the *London Daily Telegraph*, we should, using the above instances, arrange the incidents in the following order of value :—



ASSASSINATION OF THE PRIME MINISTER.

WAR DECLARED BETWEEN THE U.S.A. AND  
JAPAN.

APPALLING COLLISION BETWEEN THE *DREAD-  
NOUGHT* AND THE *MAURETANIA*.

MANSION HOUSE BURNED DOWN.

CONSCRIPTION ABOLISHED IN GERMANY.

DISCOVERY, IN A DEVONSHIRE VILLAGE, OF A FOR-  
GOTTEN PICTURE BY RAPHAEL.

BURGLARY AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

The reasons for this selection would be based on the supposition that to the readers of Great Britain the assassination of the Prime Minister, being so near home, would be of even more important interest than the declaration of war between America and Japan. But terrible as would be the sensation caused by the news of the *Dreadnought-Mauretania* disaster it would be of less general interest than the outbreak of war. The burning of the Mansion House would admittedly be a local incident, but owing to the sentimental interest attached to it as the residence of the Lord Mayor of London, and its importance as a landmark in the first city of the Empire, it would be entitled to precedence over the surprising news from Germany, which might have far-reaching effects on the Territorial scheme. Finally, the discovery of a Raphael would, I think, be deserving of even greater importance than the British Museum burglary.

In a few words, then, the journalist must not only have the instinct for finding news : he must know

which news to keep and which to throw away. And having finally selected his news he must know its value and how to treat it.

But what chance is there for the competent man if he chooses journalism for his career? Naturally, in the present congested state of civilised activity, it is, like other professions, as we have said, already crowded, but nowadays there are far more chances in journalism than ever, and there is, to quote the old maxim, plenty of room on the top. In proportion to the close work, the pains that have to be taken to ensure originality and accuracy, and the anxious responsibility, to say nothing of the topsy-turvy kind of life which the profession compels many men to have to live, journalism cannot be numbered as among the most lucrative of occupations. It holds out neither the fixity of tenure nor the hope of a pension as in the Civil Service. Even the highest salaries are barely commensurate with what is given in exchange; for if ever there was a calling that demanded the entire attention of the mind and all human patience and endurance that vocation is undoubtedly the one we are considering. If he is on the editorial staff of a daily morning paper he must be prepared to deny himself the joys of society. He can neither dine out nor spend an evening at the theatre. The hour that sees him going down to his office finds other professional men returning home. At 2 a.m. he leaves the building with the smell of printer's ink in his nostrils and the heavy, tremulous roar of the machines in his ears. It has

been a wearying, trying night, full of all sorts of sensational news with the terrible possibility of having missed some important item which the rival paper will have in due prominence next morning. Finally, as he lays his head on his pillow not long before dawn, he asks himself the plain question—Is it worth it?

The answer will be given differently by different men according to the trend of their natures. For the sensitive man, who lacks courage and keenness, who is easily disappointed, who cannot tolerate the intense nervous strain which the life means night after night, year after year, the life is indeed unendurable. But to him who has a taste for the adventurous and a hatred of monotony, who feels a thrill of delight, with his finger, so to speak, at one end of the wire which brings all the world's news first to him and his colleagues while other men sleep, there is something really worth while in putting up with many inconveniences if only for a short period. In a big newspaper office there is to be obtained an education which not all the public schools, not all the universities, nor all the travel and book-learning can teach one.

Some men enter journalism through the rank of reporter, rising through good work to doing "specials," becoming war correspondents, and, afterwards—being exceptionally fitted through such wide and varied experience in gathering news in many parts of the world—are offered the post of editor. One could give several instances of this happening. Many a public-school man or uni-



versity graduate, not yet certain as to what career he is about to adopt, takes up journalism as a stop-gap, beginning by sending in articles, and sometimes supplying merely paragraphs, only to find journalism so fascinating that he has continued until either an editorial chair awaited him or the practice thus obtained in writing has enabled him to branch out less in the direction of journalism than into authorship. For those who have the education and requisite adaptability, combined with a capacity for getting new ideas, the best way to enter journalism is undoubtedly to begin by writing articles for the magazines, "turnovers" for such papers as the *Globe*, and the *Evening Standard*, and, whenever he has special knowledge of any matter of popular interest at the moment, articles for the daily press. At the present time, for instance, a journalist who has a special knowledge of aviation and flying machines, finds many doors open to him as a contributor which otherwise would have been closed.

Having once got an entrance into the profession, he will acquire by practice the very necessary ability of thinking quickly and orderly and putting his ideas speedily into literary form, without at the same time adopting as his own mode of expression the conventionalities of the worst "journalese." In the days when the interviewing of personalities was more popular in the papers than it is to-day, this offered many an opportunity for the young man to make headway. He could go to an editor and proffer to get a personal impression

from an interesting notability, through a private friendship, which the editor could not easily obtain. Provided the article were written in accordance with the tone and policy of the paper, the proposition was a fair one, and so the contributor obtained his first start. If that were successful, then other names being suggested as likely to provide matter for suitable interviews, there was every chance for the journalist to continue. From that he could go on, being careful to obtain a reputation for accuracy in writing his facts and in delivering his MS on the date promised. But latterly the interview has become somewhat out-of-date, and the chances for its acceptance are not so many as formerly. At the same time there will always be a demand for interesting matter concerning prominent personalities, and thus a fair chance is still afforded. If the journalist is a good linguist he may be sent off in preference to more experienced men to interview a celebrated French actress as to her impressions of London, or to get from the President of a South American republic as he lands at Southampton his views on the latest financial crisis.

It was a well-known self-made millionaire who advised every young man desirous of success in life first to make up his mind exactly as to what he wanted, and, having done so, to concentrate all his energies on obtaining his heart's desire. The advice especially holds good with reference to journalism. Having made up your mind to remain a journalist, choose, as soon as ever you have had the oppor-

tunity of doing so, some particular branch of the profession for which you seem specially suited. If you are going to be a reporter, make up your mind that you will become a "special" who will be sent abroad to write up the big crisis in Turkey, the latest developments in the Balkans, the Coronation of the new European Sovereign or whatever may be the big topics of the day. You have the chance of becoming, too, the resident correspondent in Berlin, Paris, New York, St. Petersburg, or elsewhere, for your paper or for one of the big news agencies. This will all depend less on your skill as a writer than the celerity and accuracy which you possess as a news-gatherer. You may have only moderate literary gifts, but having shown on several important occasions that you were capable of getting exclusive news, thus making a good "scoop" for your paper, you have displayed a talent for a special kind of journalism which brings with it its own reward.

If, again, you are not adapted for this hurry and scurry, and care little whether you or the other man gets hold of the big sensational news to-day which is forgotten twenty-four hours after, but yet you take considerable pride in the construction and balance of your sentences and the full value which follows from a careful choice of words, then your sphere will be found rather in the more literary branches of journalism, such as the articles on page 4 of the *Daily Mail*, whilst you have also the not inconsiderable scope of the weeklies and monthlies as well. As you have practice you will learn to



save time by getting at the heart of things, of going straight to the point without seeming to be in a hurry to get there. If you intend to remain a free-lance—and there are many to-day who are content to make several hundred pounds a year by being attached definitely to no special paper, but supplying matter to a large number of journals of every class—then carry on your business on an intelligent basis. Consider what the public and your editors are likely to want. Cast your eyes round to see what big events will probably focus popular attention very shortly, and be ahead of other people in getting together photographs and matter in readiness for the time when such an article as you contemplate will become topical. I know of one man whose income from this source every year runs into four figures, who in order to collect his material travels thousands of miles all over the world in order to obtain matter at first hand.

Should your ambitions entice you to aspire to become an editor, even more essential is it for you to keep in touch with the mind of the general public, to learn to know its tastes and preferences. Practice in your spare time making-up your paper, selecting news and presenting it in such a manner as will please the eyes and minds of those for whom you are catering. An editor has an unquenchable thirst for something topical, something new, or even something old presented in a novel form. He might be glad to offer a contributor twenty guineas for an article on submarines the day after one of them has foundered, when normally the

contribution might not be worth to him more than twenty shillings.

Coming down to actual figures, while different prices rule in different offices, you will probably find that for a long time your first contributions will be paid for at the rate of one guinea per thousand words. That is, in fact, the average market rate for ordinary contributions possessing average merit. Articles of special interest, and specially commissioned because of the writer's peculiar knowledge of a certain subject, are remunerated at a higher scale. Some papers pay more, some less : some decline to pay in guineas on the plea that the odd shillings are annoying in making up their account books, a reason that is never received by the contributors except with smiles. A few years ago one or two of the magazines in England were willing to pay such sums as twenty-five pounds for an article that interested them : but to-day with decreased circulations it is far more rare for such to happen. Two guineas a thousand words is by no means a rare price, and if the article is out of the ordinary it is a fair rate of remuneration to ask of the editor.

Although in their early stages there is a similarity of chance between the careers of respectively the barrister and journalist, yet the analogy does not continue. When the barrister eventually comes into his own the plums are worth having. No one in journalism—except the proprietor—can make a fortune out of his work. You may find yourself as sub-editor on one of the big London dailies at

£300 a year, or as chief sub-editor at £400, or as editor at £800 or £1000, but considering the nature of the work and its stress, the amount is ridiculously small. Nevertheless, in spite of the demands which journalism makes on a man's nerves and brain and body, it is one of the best finishing schools to be found. As such it has been used by some of our cleverest statesmen and authors, and as such it is to be recommended to those who have youth and the opportunity, but have not yet been able to determine which of the many occupations in life they will in the end attach themselves to.



## CHAPTER II

### THE SECRET OF SUCCESS

IF you are lucky enough to get the chance, and can afford to wait, begin at the beginning. Get a thorough knowledge of the inside working of a newspaper office. Learn the difficulties which the modern reporter in the race for news has to contend with, in order that his paper may be the first in the field with the fullest and most accurate of information on what is happening. Become acquainted with the limitations imposed by printing methods, how your paper is set up, how it is printed. Learn how it is distributed to all parts of the globe, and how the managerial and advertisement departments are conducted. This knowledge, whenever you become editor, will place you considerably ahead of many men who know only one part of the routine by which a journal is issued to its thousands of readers. Having familiarised yourself with the various departments, you can specialise in that particular branch for which you regard yourself as most fitted.

In journalism as in no other profession opportunities are constantly arising full of possibilities for the live, keen man. "Many journalists," says Sir

Hugh Gilzean-Reid, LL.D, D.L., who was concerned in founding the first complete halfpenny evening paper in the Kingdom, "fail to rise in the profession through lack of education and systematic training : others because they scamp their work and have no perseverance. How often one sees a reporter arriving at a function when it is half or quite over, and then gathering up unreliable scraps from some one present or a secretary who has been so occupied that he scarcely knows what has taken place. And yet there is this to be said—hundreds are capable, industrious, and conscientious, and yet are somehow doomed to work out a poor and harassed existence. There is something no doubt in chance : there is much more in seizing the opportunity when it comes, which so many fail to do."

There is no stage in the career of a journalist when his education is complete. True as this statement is with regard to all of us it has here a special significance. "No knowledge is wasted in journalism," remarked the late Sir Edwin Arnold, who more than most men knew what such an assertion really meant. "Sooner or later," he said, "everything you know or have seen, every experience of life, every bit of practical knowledge is valuable." Owing to the constant change in the horizon, the journalist, in order to keep himself in a condition that renders him capable of writing about the events of to-day, the issues that will follow to-morrow, is always learning. And in exact proportion as he is acquainted with every branch of

knowledge is he qualified to hand out information to his readers. It is said that a certain distinguished member of one of our older universities was as an undergraduate set an exceedingly difficult essay to write. A man of considerable ability and brilliance, he at once realised that his knowledge on the particular subject set was insufficient. All that he had ever known of the matter could be summed up in a few lines. But such was his art which concealed art that he was complimented by his tutor on the excellence of his essay, which, if it lacked information, at least concealed ignorance. It is the same with the journalist. At all costs he must never plead ignorance. Next to complete knowledge on everything—which is possessed by no man, not even the youngest undergraduate or the most self-confident of junior barristers—is the knowledge of the best sources of information, not merely of books but of living authorities. Perhaps the most illustrious journalist of our day, Mr. W. T. Stead, once remarked in the writer's hearing that when engaged in the editorial work of the *Pall Mall Gazette* a matter of great importance arose about which no ordinary layman could give through the columns of the paper the information which the public desired. One of the staff immediately suggested asking a certain well-known man to contribute an article on the subject. He was the recognised expert in his own special sphere, and no living man was better informed thereon. At first this seemed feasible until it was pointed out, with much truth, that so learned an authority,



who was so deeply steeped in the intricacies of his own learning, would not easily be able to stoop to the mental standard of the average daily reader. His article would be profound, but it would be wearisome. Better far would it be to send a capable journalist to the expert, and thus by carefully sifting the facts and getting at the crux of the problem he would be able to write in language more suited for ordinary men and women, who only seek to know the general outlines of a case without being immersed in a confused sea of arguments and contra-arguments.

It is obvious, then, that among his other virtues your ideal journalist must possess the power of adaptability, the ability to grasp difficult problems in incidents, speeches and interviews, coupled with the further ability of presenting them in simple, dignified English so as to be comprehended by the multitude. This can come not as a sudden inspiration but as the result only of practice and training. "Young men," wrote Mr. J. A. Spender, editor of the *Westminster Gazette*, in the *Grand Magazine* some years ago, "come to me straight from college to ask my advice, and I find that they usually expect to write important articles at once. In other words, they want to be regarded as fully qualified journalists without anything in the nature of preliminary training. It is not so with any other profession—in law, medicine, teaching, etc., they know that they must undergo a long and severe apprenticeship. The ability to write is essential, but it is not everything, and the man who enters

journalism, however clever he may be, ought to be prepared to work for a time without much result. . . . In the journalism of to-day practical knowledge of life is of great value. There is not much scope for the old-fashioned leader-writer who has spent his life in the same office, comfortably producing political and social essays. But there is plenty of opportunity for the man who can visualise a problem from personal knowledge and observation. . . . The young man who would be a journalist must have courage. Many a young man is frightened from the profession because it is said to be so 'precarious': he prefers the security of the Civil Service. But with courage, and such other qualities as I have already indicated, he has really little to fear."

"If you want to get into this office," said an editor of one of the big London dailies to an aspiring journalist, "you have to get an axe and burst your way in: no other way is possible." What he meant was that unless you can show that the paper cannot get on without you, or that your services are highly to be desired, there is no room for you. It is in this spirit that the man who is going to be a success in journalism goes about his work. He is running a race with some of the keenest workers in the most active and most progressive of all the professions. The news has to be caught red-hot and served up before it has given off any of its heat. He has to be a man full of enterprise and ideas, with unlimited powers of resource when a series of disappointments meets

him. He must be tactful when sent out to interview a celebrity who hates to be the subject of an interview ; he is frequently entrusted with confidential information which he cannot divulge, although he has his duty to perform to the paper that sent him on his errand. As an editor he sometimes finds himself in possession of news which he is compelled to keep back either from personal reasons or for lack of confirmation, notwithstanding the tempting knowledge that such news, if allowed to go into the paper, would augment his circulation by thousands.

America has led the way in setting up schools of journalism and in allocating departments under this head in some of her universities. Speaking at the annual conference this year of the Institute of Journalists, Mr. Walter Williams, Dean of the School of Journalism of the University of Missouri, described what had been done in one year's progress. In order to fit the young man for this profession courses were given in History, English, Sociology, Economics, Political Science, as well as more particularly on Newspaper Administration, Reporting, Editorial Writing, Copy Reading, Magazine Journalism, Newspaper Jurisprudence and Illustrative Art in comparative journalism. Finally, a small afternoon daily newspaper, complete in all its details, was produced by students of the school.

Under these headings are summed up and expressed with characteristic American clearness the lines along which, as it seems to me, the man who wishes to be a successful journalist will seek to



train himself. Whereas we have nothing in England to correspond with this School of Journalism in our English universities, yet the successful journalist will in the course of his reading have acquired a knowledge of social and political matters. The more practical subjects he will have had to learn only as he walked along the rough and devious road leading to success. The duties of an editor, as far as I know, have never been set forth in a handbook on journalism before, and these we shall deal with in a later chapter. Reporting can only be learnt by experience, and practice of make-up will alone ensure that perfection in the attractiveness of a paper which it is the desire of every editor to obtain. But as soon as ever he has secured a position as editor of a periodical of almost any description, the journalist will be well-advised to ask a legal friend to steer him carefully through the law affecting libel and copyright, of which indeed it is well that he should possess some knowledge while yet a contributor.

Against the theory of establishing separate training institutions in England for journalism, there are many opponents. The Hon. Harry Lawson, for instance, President of the Institute of Journalists and son of the proprietor of the *Daily Telegraph*, believes that journalism is of too broad a nature to be confined to special courses of technical instruction as apart from general education. In his opinion the ethics of journalism are best learned in the clear atmosphere of a good public school: there is a danger of maintaining a

dead-level of the commonplace in journalism by training men in special courses as suggested. At the same time Mr. Lawson thinks that universities might offer special courses so as to give those who already are journalists a knowledge of special subjects likely to be of use to newspapers.

"Were I anxious to train a young man for such a life" [as journalism], wrote Lord Northcliffe, the founder of the *Daily Mail*, "I would first give him the best education possible, the education to be acquired at one of the few hard-working public schools. I would then send him to a university for a year, not with any desire that he should get even a pass degree, but that he might not enter the battle of life too early. After that he should travel in his own country and abroad. Then I should start him as a reporter. As a reporter he will learn tact, the management of men, and the need for energy and accuracy. If he is under a good editor every quality for success that is in him will be discovered and developed. . . . After two or three years of general reporting I would make my ideal young man a sub-editor. In that position he will learn quickness of decision, the capacity for dealing with emergencies, promptitude, and as much exactness as is to be found in any occupation, perhaps, except that of the actuary. Such a training, which would of necessity include considerable experience of the world, would fit a man for public life if he so desired, or for the quasi-public life of the editor. Whether my ideal youth

would ever become an editor-in-chief is very difficult to say. Good editors are few and far between.”<sup>1</sup>

I have already emphasised the importance of the ambitious man specialising as soon as ever practicable. This is the advice also given by Mr. Harry Lawson to intending journalists, for “there is no room in London now for the old all-round reporters.” “Journalism,” said Sir Douglas Straight, some time before relinquishing the editorship of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, “has many branches. By that I mean that the qualities required to make a good leader or occasional note-writer are as different and distinct from those which constitute a good news editor or skilled reporter as chalk is from cheese. In all these cases energy, industry, punctuality, and self-possession in moments of pressure or emergency are essential to good and successful work: but the purely intellectual qualifications necessary to turn out the one class of work create no necessary fitness to grapple with either of the others. A man may be an admirable writer of leading articles, and yet wholly out of his element in a news-room, or hopelessly incompetent to give a coherent account of a public meeting. Conversely, an able and incisive reviewer of books, who sits down to write a leader, would be very much at sea. . . . Any young man who desires to pursue the profession of a journalist must first of all subject himself to a very frank and severe self-examination as to his own in-

<sup>1</sup> *Journalism as a Profession*, by Arthur Lawrence.



tellectual qualifications, and for what particular branch of journalistic work they appear best to fit him."

Let us now proceed, then, to consider in closer detail the various branches in journalism that are open to him.

## CHAPTER III

### HOW TO BEGIN

WE will suppose you have followed the advice to enter journalism as a free-lance. You have good health and spirits, and have passed through a public school or university, and have in the meantime acquired some knowledge of literary matters : at least you have a literary bias. You have determined to live by your pen and your brains. How are you going to set about it ?

First of all, do not waste your time seeking out from among your friends letters of introduction to those who happen to find themselves in the position as editors. If you have a good idea for an article, and after perusal of the contents of a particular magazine or paper you feel that it is in accordance with its tone, write to the editor asking for an appointment for a short interview, and if he grants you one lay your idea before him in the briefest way. Don't waste either his or your time in futile remarks. Your society may be charming and you may have a wealth of anecdote, but there are others waiting outside with ideas just as good as yours, and incidentally he has to get his paper out or the public and his proprietors will not be happy. Do not go

to an editor with only half an idea—I speak as one who has suffered at the hands of contributors—but have your subject sufficiently developed in your mind, so that in a few sentences you can give him a rough outline and the number of words it is likely to run into. If your editor is in charge of an illustrated paper, then he may naturally ask about suitable illustrations. If you have brought these with you so much the better, as it will assist considerably in determining the suitability of the subject for the magazine or journal. If you do not possess these, and they cannot be got without difficulty, then one of the various illustration-agencies will possibly be able to supply you or the editor. A list of these will be found in any directory or in such works as the *Literary Year-Book*. You can make your own terms with the agent, but the customary fee is half a guinea for the use of each photo. Assuming the idea generally appeals to the editor, he may, not having seen any of your work before, ask you to write the article without definitely commissioning it. Owing to the dishonesty of many authors, either intentional or otherwise, so many editors nowadays both in New York and London accept few articles without first seeing them. At any rate you will not hesitate to write your first contribution for him on the understanding that if it is not suitable it will not be accepted. At the same time you are entitled to know definitely whether the idea as outlined by you is one that tempts him. The rest depends for the most part on you yourself.



If, owing to pressure on his time or other reasons, the editor is unable to make an appointment, you have still the chance of submitting the idea in writing. This may be followed by an immediate invitation to call. Be clear and precise when you arrange terms, and get this matter settled in a letter if possible. Then the subsequent dispute as to whether the pounds ought to have been guineas, or whether the illustrations were to have been paid for separately, cannot arise. Let it be clearly understood, too, whether you part with all rights or only with the British Serial Rights. If you contemplate publishing your article as one of a series in book-form this may be a valuable property to you—or not. If you offer an article already written and the editor accepts it, you can easily make your own arrangements; but if the editor commissions you to write an article on a certain subject then that MS becomes the property of the proprietors of the paper. You will not be as foolish as some inexperienced contributors, who ought to know better, and enter one editorial office thinking it is that of another and quite distinct publication. Editors are apt to be a little sensitive when you confuse theirs with a rival journal. Nor will you be so tactless as to offer a subject of archæological interest to a paper whose articles are like the racks in the railway carriages, for light articles only.

As to the date of payment, the majority of journals post their cheques on publication. Some, however, have peculiar systems of their own on a kind of deferred payment method, yet these belong

rather to the old-fashioned journals and are rare. There is no fixed day, but some periodicals pay on the first of the month, others at the middle of the month in which the article appears. Again, no definite statement can be made as regards sending in accounts. Some papers desire it: others do not.

We come now to the question which is so often asked by the young journalist—Has the outside man any chance? The answer is emphatically in the affirmative. Editors now, more than ever, are on the smart look out for good copy and illustrations. And provided the contributor can write, and the illustrations are suitable, it is immaterial where they come from. Of course the same prices will not be paid as to a well-known author, but in the market of journalism honest goods can always find a buyer. If you have a good idea it is as welcome from you as from the most regular contributor. There is so little left in journalism which has not been attempted, not once but many times, that something having even a faint suspicion of freshness comes gladly into an editor's office. In spite of the fact that most of the monthly magazines have dropped considerably in circulation, and therefore are unable to pay as high rates to their contributors as formerly, yet I would advise the beginner to seek for luck first in this sphere for the reason that the monthly magazines, of all periodicals, have the least complete news service. A daily paper has its representatives in all parts of the globe, whereas the magazine depends in a minor

degree on what pours in from agents—most of which is either rubbish or but rarely suitable on the whole—but chiefly from regular contributors and the chance free-lance.

You will, as a free-lance, have made yourself familiar with all the well-stocked storehouses of knowledge in London. You will know your way about the British Museum and have all the popular reference books at your finger's ends, so that if, for instance, your editor suddenly found he was eight pages short a few hours before going to press through having to throw out other matter, and you were asked to prepare a contribution on a subject that was new to you, it would not take you long to get the facts that you desire. You ought also to have a rough idea of the contents of such buildings as the National Gallery, the Tate Gallery, the Wallace Collection, the National Portrait Gallery and the chief departments of the South Kensington Museum ; for since illustrated journalism is more than ever being used it is of first importance that the journalist should know how far the art collections at hand are likely to be of use to him. Nor will you, even if you are confronted with a difficult subject about which you know next to nothing, decline the editor's invitation. As a journalist, it is not so much your duty to write about those things of which you have a complete knowledge, as to be able to tap the sources of information. Do not be like the clerk in the story told by the American editor in the *Message to Garcia*.

" You are sitting now in your office," wrote the

editor, "six clerks are within call. Summon any one and make this request: 'Please look in the Encyclopædia and make a brief memorandum for me concerning the life of Correggio!' Will the clerk quietly say 'Yes, sir,' and go to the task? On your life he will not. He will look at you out of a fishy eye, and ask one or more of the following questions:—

'Who was he?'

'Which encyclopædia?'

'Where is the Encyclopædia?'

'Was I hired for that?'

'Don't you mean Bismarck?'

'What's the matter with Charlie doing it?'

'Is he dead?'

'Is there any hurry?'

'Shan't I bring you the book and let you look it up yourself?'

'What do you want to know for? . . .'

"Now if you are wise, you will not bother to explain to your 'assistant' that Correggio is indexed under the C's, not in the K's, but you will smile sweetly and say, 'Never mind,' and go and look it up yourself."

The ideal contributor from an editor's point of view is the exact reverse of that American clerk. The editor has more to worry him than most people, and if you can obtain a reputation for being able to get the best information accurately and promptly without bothering him as to the means by which you do so, you will find considerably more numerous commissions coming your way, and in return for the



amount of time and trouble that you save him he will be not unwilling to make an increase in the rate of your remuneration. Should the subject be one that cannot be got out of books, go direct to the best expert at hand. Men who are enthusiastic over a subject, giants though they may be in intellect and reputation, are always more or less ready to speak to the journalist, if only for a short time. And it is an accepted axiom found by most journalists to be true, that the more distinguished the man so much the more easy is he to be interviewed. It is only the man with a sudden and small reputation that puts on airs. The fact is that the power of the press is recognised now as so overwhelming that it is tactful to meet with its demands whenever possible.

"There are two sections of the community," remarked a far-sighted politician, "whom you should never quarrel with : otherwise they have it in their power to do you untold harm. One is the police, the other the press."

As to your writing, the style demanded by the popular press is admittedly not of a very high literary standard : yet it has a standard of its own, and you will acquire this only by reading and practice in writing. Let your first aim be to write naturally and sympathetically. Be careful to avoid being dull. Your readers are not fascinated by bald statistics, but if you can throw a few entertaining incidents and curious happenings into even the most technical article, so as to arouse interest, your work will not be wasted. Realise all the time the mind of the reader and his disposition. He

opens the magazine or popular journal when he is tired with his other work. He wants relaxation, instruction if you can give it temptingly, but at any rate recreation. Therefore pay regard to the beginning of your article. Jump right into your subject with both feet, and waste no time in generalities. "The first one or two paragraphs of the average MS," said one of the oldest and most experienced of London editors to me some time ago, "I find necessary to put my blue pencil through. The writer has begun without having carefully thought out how he will handle his subject. Not till he has reached the second or third paragraph has he warmed up and his mind begun to think clearly." An article should be like a play. It must have a beginning, a middle, and a good ending. If my meaning is not clear, pick up a copy of to-day's *Times* or *Daily Telegraph* and read through one of the leaders and see how well this is done. Learn how to marshal your facts, to arrange your arguments logically, to increase their force by subtle contrasts. The novelist and dramatist have to consider these essentials in order to arrive at a satisfactory result, and the same duty devolves on you. Before you sit down to write your contribution your mind should have been steeped with the subject. On a rough sheet of paper before you will be the general headings and the skeleton analysis of all that you have to say. "The art of fiction," wrote the late Sir Walter Besant, "requires first of all the power of description, truth and fidelity, observation, selection, clearness of conception and of outline,

dramatic grouping, directness of purpose, a profound belief on the part of the story-teller in the reality of his story, and beauty of workmanship. It is moreover an art which requires of those who follow it seriously that they must be unceasingly occupied in studying the ways of mankind, the social laws, the religions, philosophies, tendencies, thoughts, prejudices, superstitions of men and women." And what is so far true of the novelist's profession is not less applicable to that of the writer who contributes to the magazines and newspapers.

Having specialised as a free-lance rather than as a reporter, it is possible for you at the same time to specialise still further. If you have a hobby or a particular acquirement, such as art, there are further openings for you. You may be asked to do a regular column of criticisms of the London art exhibitions ; if not of those at Burlington House, at least of the minor exhibitions in the art dealers, for which innumerable tickets from Bond Street, Pall Mall and the Haymarket pour in to the offices of every editor. As a sportsman, there may be some branch on which you could write for other papers. If you have made a special study of music you might succeed in persuading an editor of one of the minor papers to allow you to write notices of some of the concerts at Queen's Hall and elsewhere.

Some men gain their first experience in journalism while engaged in other work. They make an offer to the editor of a paper whose exchequer is

not a large one to write without remuneration reviews of novels and non-technical books as they appear. In return the contributor becomes possessed of a small library—candidly not always worth having on one's shelves—but the practice in writing and the knowledge that his work will actually see daylight have a beneficial effect. Unless you are in a position to be able to wait, but are occupied in the meantime with some other work or profession, this is undoubtedly one of the best ways of obtaining a first insight into the work of a journalist. Even more useful still is the chance of doing dramatic criticisms for any reputable paper that will allow you. Apart from whatever gain it may bring you in other ways, there is the experience in training your mind so as to follow a plot, and then when you get home to be able to sit down and write an intelligible and entertaining précis of what you have seen and heard during the evening. In time you will find yourself studying the technique of the dramatist—how he groups his characters, how he works up to his big situations, by what economies he is able to get his telling effects. And if you will but notice these you will find how closely allied are the different branches of what we can conveniently call literature: how much there is in common between all forms of writing—in fiction, the drama and in journalism.

But after you have been engaged for some years in free-lancing the time will come when, instead of waiting outside so many editors' doors, you will



aspire to sit in their chairs and direct the fortunes of a paper yourself. During the period of your probation you will have learned a good deal about the ways of papers and the kind of matter that is required. You will have got to know many of the sources whence to draw material for copy, and a vast amount of other knowledge. Even if you intend to revert to writing of some sort; even if you should ultimately blossom out into an author or dramatist, you will find the time spent in the editorial office of a paper one of the most valuable experiences in your life. How will you set about to obtain such a post ?

Putting aside any happy accident which might open up such an opportunity, it might be well for you in the first instance to offer to act as sub-editor on a small paper at a minimum salary or even without one, stipulating that in return for being allowed to learn the editing and sub-editing of the paper during the morning you should have facilities for continuing some of your free-lance work, and of writing at least one article in each issue of the paper, to be paid for at the usual rates of that paper. The bargain is a fair one both sides, for if the circulation of the paper be a small one and does not justify the expense of a sub-editor, your services with a year or two of previous journalism may not be without value. At the same time from your own point of view you are learning without payment of premium the intricacies of the highest branch of your profession. Afterwards you might be able to go on to a paper

of larger circulation and better standing, and thence perhaps to one of the big dailies. Such papers as the *Athenæum*, the *Daily Telegraph*, and the *Daily News*, sometimes contain advertisements announcing vacancies. In the absence of these you might be successful if you wrote direct to the editor of one of those journals which, in order to maintain their reputation for versatility, are continually engaging new members of their staff. Whether you decide to remain there may or may not be a matter for your choice. At any rate it will fit you the more readily when you find yourself, as you probably will now—sooner or later—with an invitation to edit a journal of big or little importance. It is here that influence, chance, or peculiar personal fitness may enter so considerably into your selection that the matter admits of no discussion within these pages. By giving an insight into the building that encloses the machinery, human as well as metal, which produces the daily paper, we shall be able to show some idea of what is required of the man who is put in command of the huge organisation on which thousands of readers are depending for their information on passing events, morning after morning, day after day, year after year.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRODUCING A DAILY PAPER

LONG before ever a new morning or evening paper is first issued to its readers full dress rehearsals have been going on for weeks, and sometimes for months. Even before that the amount of work to be done in arranging for a constant and reliable news service is tremendous. It would not be difficult to fill the whole of these pages with a recital of the details to be considered. Correspondents in the chief foreign cities and districts abroad and in the United Kingdom have to be appointed, whilst simultaneously arrangements are also made for intelligence to be supplied through such a medium as Reuter's and the Central News Agency. Some of the more enterprising papers have their own private cables laid across the United Kingdom, in order that no delay in the transmission of news may be suffered. Away in the lonely regions of Newfoundland and Scandinavia vast acreages of forests have to be purchased for the wood-pulp out of which the paper is to be made. Picked men have to be found for the staff, and at last the size and shape of the paper and the type to be used are decided on. When you buy for a penny

or a halfpenny your morning or evening paper you are getting the greatest value, in proportion to the cost of production, that is obtainable for your money. The cost of producing a daily paper has been estimated by those who own them at about £1000 a day. Consequently no paper expects to make a profit on its circulation alone. It is the amount of advertising matter that can be attracted into its columns which makes the bargain possible. This factor of the advertisements is a highly important one in determining the shape and general appearance of the journal so as to appeal to the advertiser. Incidentally it may be explained that to this cause is traced the enormous size of some of the weekly papers. The big west-end firms, for instance, value very highly the advantages of publicity to be gained from a wide, bold page on which to announce their products. Speaking generally, advertisements depend on the circulation of a journal, though advertisers believe also in the merits of a moderately circulating paper, provided it appeals to a particular and select class. But under few circumstances is the old saying that nothing succeeds like success more applicable than to the newspaper or journal of whatever kind. For as the circulation increases so proportionately does the volume of advertising. And as the sales decrease so also do the advertisements.

I have mentioned the subject of advertisements with emphasis, for the novice usually fails to realise the important relation which they bear to



the paper : they are indeed at once its foundation and corner-stone.

And so the rehearsals begin. The reporters, the special correspondents, the news agencies send in their news by telegraph, telephone and cable from all parts. The sub-editors prepare it for publication, the compositors set it up in type, the machines print it, night after night, yet not one copy is allowed to get into the hands of the public. Each issue as it is produced will be scanned, criticised, modified, and perhaps entirely remodelled until, after weeks of practice, the paper comes out one morning on to the bookstalls. By a combination of capital, brains, hard work, machinery and electricity all the chief news of the world is put into your hands for the same price that you pay for a box of matches. How is it all done in a night ? Come down Fleet Street and see for yourself.

As we enter the building on the ground floor are noticed the offices connected with the financial and advertising part of the paper. Take the lift and come upstairs. Here is a business which never closes its doors all the week, which is always working. Nine o'clock sees the arrival of the day editor, who scans the rival newspapers in order to see if his paper missed any important news which the rival journal contains. He will at once deal with any urgent developments which may have occurred since the previous night, and may find it necessary to summon by telephone or telegraph the editor and other members of the staff. Presently the news editor appears, who has focused in his

mind a rough idea of the events of the day. Provincial or foreign correspondents have to be instructed by telegraph as to how many words to send on a certain important matter—a murder, a public speech, a mysterious rumour, perhaps it may be. The paper's own reporters—we are dealing of course with a big London daily—have to be dispatched to get a good "story" on whatever subject may be allotted to them. Then at midday the editor comes in, and after transacting correspondence and other business, goes away again. At half-past three or four o'clock he is back again, when the heads of the editorial departments meet together—not always amicably on some journals—and a discussion takes place in preparation for the making of the next issue of the paper. At six o'clock the night staff relieves the men who have been toiling all day. Matters begin to get lively now. The sub-editors and chief sub-editor take in hand the news which has come in so far—the police and law reports, the remarkable happenings of the day, discarding what is unsuitable and condensing lengthy, perhaps verbatim, accounts down to a short paragraph or a few words, according to their value. News comes in on "flimsies"—the thinnest of paper, written very often in such a way as to make it only just legible. At the top right-hand corner may be the name of the correspondent responsible for the news.

When each item of news has been given its full rights as to length and headings, it is sent upstairs to the composing room by one of those

pneumatic pipes frequently seen in post offices for sending telegrams to the next floor. Meanwhile the foreign editor is dealing with the news coming in across oceans and continents. By 11.30 p.m. all the "home" news should have been in the compositor's hands, and an hour later the foreign intelligence should be there too. The Paris news may have come across by telephone direct into the sub-editorial room, while the tape machines will still be ticking out the latest parliamentary speeches, although in many papers now less space is devoted to this, and a special parliamentary representative sends in a general sketch of the proceedings at the House. About one o'clock or a little earlier, just when you are looking forward to an opportunity of a respite from your labours, the telephone bells begin ringing violently, and reams of copy and telegrams come pouring in. A big fire has broken out at the docks, the North Pole has been discovered, an important development has taken place in international politics, and you renew your activities in order that nothing worth printing may be missed from your paper.

Now come upstairs on to the next storey. Here during the earlier hours of the afternoon and evening the advertisements have been set up by hand. Skilled compositors are finishing setting up by linotype the latest news that has been sent up from the sub-editor's room below. The proofs are corrected, revised by a legal member of the staff lest that dreaded enemy of every editor, a libel, shall have crept in. Perhaps through haste or



carelessness a sub-editor may have written that "John Smith stole a diamond bracelet from the window of a Regent Street jeweller's"; whereas, since he was committed for trial and the matter is still *sub judice* and unproven, the account should have read, "John Smith is *alleged* to have stolen," etc. It is quite possible that the jury may find John Smith "not guilty," in which case you would probably have an action for damages brought against your paper. Even again the proofs are revised by the editor, and headings altered as being too dull or too sensational. Finally, at the last minute, an official telegram arrives necessitating an important alteration in some obscure paragraph. Perhaps it is no more than to state that the name of the barque wrecked off the Cornish coast in the afternoon's gale was not the *Mary Anne* but the *Mary Jane*. It may seem trivial, but your paper prides itself on its accuracy, and so alter it you must.

But time is getting on, and the editor is getting a worried look. The department is nearly a minute and a half late. The columns of type are made up into pages, screwed tightly into a strong frame called a "forme," after which, with the utmost dispatch and orderliness, a papier-mâché mould is taken of the type. As the reader is aware, type is set upside down. Let us call this state a negative. The impression therefore found in the papier-mâché mould is thus a positive. Into this mould molten metal is poured, and the impression of one page thus comes out a negative. It is in semicircular shape for fitting on to the machines, and will of



course, through contact with the paper, produce a positive again. After all the pages of type for the morning's issue have been thus dealt with, these half-circles have their edges trimmed and are sent down by lift to the basement of the building, where the mammoth printing machines stand ready to receive them. These curved plates are affixed to the machines, and the gigantic rolls of paper begin to revolve and the ink to distribute itself in sufficient quantities. There is some little delay for the passing of the first proofs of the printed paper. Perhaps the feed from the roll of paper will not run smoothly at first, or the machinery requires some other adjustment. But by the time that it has been remedied, the rest of the moulded plates have come down for the other machines, and at last away the machines start devouring paper at many miles an hour. From the machines which, besides printing, also fold and count them as they are produced, the papers are hurried to an endless band which carries them upstairs to the street, where carts are waiting to hurry them to the distributing agents, and to the chief railway termini. Here, in some cases, special trains await them. That was one reason why the editor was anxious at even a few seconds' delay. Every moment is valuable, so that the paper may arrive punctually on the householder's breakfast table next morning.

The picture which I have endeavoured to draw represents a more or less normal night. In exciting times, as during a war or general election, matters are far less peaceful. All kinds of news comes

rushing in, every kind of rumour, which before publication must necessarily be verified. Your war correspondent or the special descriptive writer doing the America Cup Race in New York has been unable to get his account through the telegraph until the last minute—to the anxiety of every one in the London office. Certain ill-disposed persons, either from malice, out of desire for practical joking, or for some subtle purpose known only to themselves, send in “spoof stories,” which would make the paper next morning the laughing-stock of the country. So, through extreme caution, you leave the item out, only to find later that all your contemporaries have inserted it, and that though the incident bore on its face every appearance of being incredible, yet it was another of those strange happenings which are more remarkable than fiction.

But we have not yet done with the literary staff that has been toiling so hard during the evening. The modern daily paper represents the most complete example of the economic principle of division of labour. It has its organisation divided and subdivided to the furthest limits. Thus one man as financial editor has dealt with the city article and the Stock Exchange news. Another man has come in and gone out again after preparing the weather forecast. One man has been to the first night of a new play, which did not end till after eleven o'clock, leaving him a few scanty minutes in which to write his notice. The leader-writers in another room, having scanned the news that had arrived during the evening,

commune among themselves as to what are the outstanding topics which will entitle them to leaders. Each man is probably a specialist on several subjects, and has the quick brain and the ready pen. What shall be the policy of the paper on a sudden trend in political affairs, a new movement, an alteration in the outlook of a problem that has been vexing the country for some time? Rapid yet not hasty decision must be made, leaving, if possible, a loophole through which the paper can climb out without shame if subsequent events indicate an error in its policy. The literary editor too, has been responsible for the section dealing with reviews of books, and if the paper is one of those possessing an illustrated page, usually called the magazine page, it will have been the duty of another to see that it breathes actuality. Yet again a fiction editor has been responsible for the selection and apportioning of the serial novel appearing in its columns, whilst a lady journalist will have seen to the fashions for women.

The inside of a building where a paper is produced is no quiet place where the slacker can take a rest-cure. It bears resemblance both to a beehive and a dockyard. No one is inactive: violent noises, nerve-wrecking, unbearable, are going on all round you as you endeavour to read "flimsies" that are scarcely decipherable, and to collect your thoughts to write for the compositors already waiting for your copy. A medley of telephone bells, slamming of doors; the quick, hurried tramp of messengers bringing in more

reports ; the whirring of the machinery down below, vibrating the whole building, groaning as if reluctant to be compelled to print miles of newspaper ; the purring of the lifts up and down the building ; the click of typewriters racing against each other ; the distracting sounds of a dozen ventilating fans—these are the conditions that send you home gladly to your couch and your too-well-earned rest. As I said in an earlier chapter, to the sensitive man who can only work in a peaceful study without being hurried, this kind of journalism offers little else than grievous torment ; and I know of one man who, after one night's experience, forsook the office for ever. Yet for those who can steel themselves to endure the work even for a time, it is an experience full of interest, and enables them to read their daily papers with far greater insight, and to appreciate as not one-tenth of the public ever does what it has necessitated in order that before you set about your own day's work you are able to be informed of what has happened in most parts of the world but a few hours earlier.



## CHAPTER V

### DAILY JOURNALISM

Now that we have had a peep into the general work transacted in a newspaper office, let us stop for a few moments to consider in greater detail the separate duties of the individual workers.

In many respects there is in the methods and apportioning of responsibilities a close analogy between a newspaper office and a battleship. Both, as the result of the development in invention, are one orderly mass of complications. The captain on the bridge has his counterpart in the editor in his room with no end of telephones, bells and speaking-tubes attached to his desk. He is responsible for the safety of the ship on its passage through the treacherous seas of news, and every night he has to get his ship undamaged into port. He has a thousand matters constantly harassing him, innumerable petty worries, complaints from provincial readers that the "paper is not what it used to be," or attacking him for a certain line of policy adopted by the paper. Letters from unreasonable, though charitably inclined, people, asking, without realising the fulness of their requests,

that the valuable and already crowded columns of the paper may be opened for the furtherance of some imagined grievance, or the relief of some destitute case. All sorts of bluff and clever advertising dodges are sent in with the firm hope of obtaining a cheap publicity. Threats of libel, attempts at coercion and blackmail, begging letters, contributions—some good, others mostly utterly unsuitable—offers of mysterious news purposing to make the whole civilised world gasp in amazement—all these dangers in the navigation of the ship have to be attended to with consummate care. In addition there is the control and the discipline of the considerable staff, with frequent quarrels and jealousies as well.

The foreign editor is responsible for all the news that comes from abroad. He has to see that the paper is adequately supplied with the best political and local intelligence obtainable on the Continent and all parts of the globe. For this purpose he is especially assisted by "our own correspondent" in each foreign capital. The latter will be a picked man in close touch with his own country's embassy and the leaders of thought in the country of his temporary adoption. His work is frequently one of extreme delicacy, requiring a vast amount of tact, especially when the relations between two Powers are becoming somewhat strained. His first duty is of course to see that his paper is kept accurately informed of the trend of affairs, and yet he must do this without offending the susceptibilities of his informers, or the next

time he sets out for information he may find the door closed to him. The foreign editor daily scans the continental and other foreign journals, not merely to see that his correspondents have been keeping up to their duties, but lest any exclusive news obtained abroad that will interest English readers may be passed over.

To the news editor is entrusted the immediate control of the news-gathering staff in London and the provinces. No member of the staff works harder than he, and his salary is as big or not far short of that of the editor, for if he should fail in his duty the service of the paper instantly suffers. It is he who dispatches the reporters on their search for news. He knows the capacities of his men. He will send his "star" reporter to find the missing murderer whom the police cannot trace, he will commission the polite dapper little man to interview a duchess as to her new scheme for the improving of peasant dwellings, he will dispatch the clever interviewer—the man who cannot be gainsaid—to ferret out the facts where a Sphinx-like attitude has been maintained hitherto. Has the paper begun to drop in its circulation? Then the news editor must rouse fresh interest by a sensational discovery or a heated correspondence from his readers. Is a secret marriage to take place between a millionaire and an actress? Then the news editor must have got wind of it, and his reporter and photographer must be there and see the register when it is signed. At all hours of the day and night the news editor seems to be in

and out of the office, and even when he goes home to gain a little sleep before he returns to his duties, the night editor is there at the end of a telephone ready for any news that may come in.

Editors and proprietors admit that the real backbone of a paper is found in efficient sub-editors. Their duty consists not in gathering the news, but selecting even from what the reporters have selected. On a big London paper there may be six or eight sub-editors, each with his own desk and a pile of "flimsies" before him. If a dull, bald statement of an interesting incident comes in, his duty is to turn the contribution inside out, re-write it, give it an attractive beginning and heading, infuse life into its dull statements, control its excesses and generally make it of such a length and of so many paragraphs as will not bore the reader but so rivet his attention as to ask for more. The aim of a good journalist is exactly the reverse of the author of a treatise. The latter aspires to get finality into his pages, so that no further question can reasonably be asked. The journalist, on the contrary, while telling all he knows for the present, must arouse interest in the minds of the readers, so that the final sequel to an event is delayed and each issue of the paper is awaited with excitement. Curiosity is a characteristic feature of civilised humanity, and interest in other people's business cannot easily be quenched. It is on these instincts that the newspaper of to-day plays with great and universal success. A long-drawn-out trial or libel action, a sensational rumour affecting a Cabinet Minister, a reported discovery—



these will be handled by the capable journalist in such a manner as to preserve the living interest of the readers. "Have they caught that thief yet?" "Is it true about the North Pole?" "Will there *really* be a General Election next month?" These are questions that need not be answered at once if the circulation of the paper is to be considered. It is to the sub-editor who sits collating and correcting ungrammatical, illegible, unbridled reports that the newspaper reader should be especially grateful for the interesting way in which his journal supplies its news. But over and above him the chief sub-editor exercises his sway in making-up (on paper) the general disposition of the news as it finally appears. On a lucky night a clever chief sub-editor will have every one of his columns with a startling heading—a "surprise packet in each," as it has been put. He it is who will have had to determine the prominence that shall be given to the list of events mentioned in an earlier chapter—to the assassination of the Cabinet Minister, the collision between the *Dreadnought* and the *Mauretania*, and so on. There is never a night when the paper could not have been filled several times over with news. There is never a day when many pounds are not wasted in valuable cables and telegrams which are not printed; but it is not in every one of the six nights in the working week that first-class news, striking news, will be forthcoming. One of the greatest pioneers in journalism once said in my hearing that, when it came to be examined, the contents of a newspaper were one long chronicle of

wrong-doing. But such a statement is absurd and unwarranted. If you have to chronicle the murders, suicides and objectionable divorce stories, at the same time you record deeds of heroism—the gallant saving of life from wreck and colliery disaster; the splendid coolness of the railway signal-man; the stopping of a runaway horse by a City policeman. Primarily a newspaper records events, and not all events are in opposition to virtue. Like the drama, the newspaper shows the clashing of wills, but circumstance may have made the plotting and counter-plotting justifiable. But to come back to our chief sub-editor, whether there have or have not been many clashing of wills during the previous hours to produce the events his readers are so anxiously awaiting, he must, like a clever cook, make the best out of the materials for food before him.

Assisting the sub-editors is a librarian in a room filled with useful books of reference. Whenever a doubtful point arises as to the exact spelling of a remote place, the correctness of a quotation, or the precedent for a rare event, he is at hand to point to chapter and page. His, too, are the duties of acting as “undertaker,” as he is impolitely called. That is to say, he preserves—pigeon-holed and kept up-to-date—the biographies of most of the men and women in the public eye. From every quarter, from the Society journals, from illustrations, speeches and whatever other source he collects such matter as will come in useful sooner or later. It is the lot of all men

to die, and when this occurs suddenly in the case of a well-known author or a popular peer, and the announcement comes in in a two-lined telegram at the last moment before going to press, all that the sub-editor has to do is to be handed the envelope with the details of the deceased person's career, and in a few minutes a long or short obituary notice containing innumerable anecdotes, witty utterances, and life-adventures, is ready for the compositors upstairs.

The inevitable question is, I am sure, lurking in the mind of the reader as we pass on to consider the work of the reporter. Is it essential to know shorthand? In olden days this was more necessary than it is now. To-day, while for parliamentary reports, transactions at meetings and other occasions a verbatim account is desired, yet the tendency is rather for impressionism. A man is to be used less as a machine than as a being with brains. He is to go to that meeting and come back not with a complete record of all that happened and all that was said, but with a clear, concise summary of all that was interesting. If the incident permits, humour may be infused, sarcasm or pathos; but a mere bald statement of the incidents and sayings is not regarded now as all that should be desired. This is the day of the descriptive writer, who selects with care and puts some of his own personality into his writing. What the correspondent did in chronicling a battle he must do in writing of a football match. He must draw such a mental picture as will create in the imagina-



tion of the reader an impression not dissimilar to that which would have been obtained if the latter himself had been able to be present. Therefore, in addition to his ability—his natural instinct—as a news-gatherer, the ambitious man can only become an efficient reporter by continually practising his art—by recording his own impressions of things seen in his own words and in the simplest and most entertaining style.

A reporter nowadays is essentially a man of resource. It is in America that he has been developed to the furthest extent. I have heard from the mouths of some of the cleverest and 'cutest American journalists the circumstances under which they have acquired news for their paper. A clue has been found, which the police and detective staff have missed. The scent having been once got hold of, it has been made a life-work that that reporter should not relinquish the chase until the mystery was solved. In England, when six years ago the historic case of a missing lady was the one topic which held the minds of English readers, every imaginable device and stratagem were adopted but without result. Foreign capitals were raked from suburb to suburb : rumours that the lady had been seen to take the boat-train to Calais were flashed across by the papers' foreign correspondents. Reporters were told off to meet the trains at the London termini, only to find that the lady was some one else. Ex-war correspondents were pressed into the service, and the whole country was divided into separate



compartments searched by wide-awake, eager reporters determined to get at the bottom of the mystery, but with no avail. Finally editors themselves went out in search, lest a rival paper should suddenly announce the achievement of having itself discovered the solution to the mystery. The interest of the public all the time was intense : it was better than all the serial stories in the world for keeping up the paper's circulation ; but the strain on the staff was enormous, not merely through work, but the terrible suspense of being suddenly confronted with the victory brought about by a rival journal. Finally, as every one knows, after all the available powers of investigation had been brought into use by police and press alike, early one morning, just after the paper had been printed and published, and too late to be of any journalistic value, the news came through by telephone that the solution had been achieved not by pressmen or policemen, but by a couple of boys who had found the body among the foliage of a public park.

Many a free-lance reporter has made a fine haul through a combination of a little enterprise and observation. Let us give an instance. He sees in a one-lined notice somewhere hidden away in an obscure corner of the daily paper that Jack Smith, who was sentenced to penal servitude for life for a murder which thrilled the whole world and was ever clothed with an air of deep mystery, is to be released at nine o'clock on Monday morning. Remembering the crime for which Smith was

found guilty the journalist sees tremendous possibilities if only Smith could be induced to tell the whole story and his own life as well. So he goes down by train and meets Smith as he is released. He knows quite well that the man on coming out will have little or no money and fewer prospects. All that Smith wants in this world perhaps is the chance of getting a cottage in the country away from his old haunts, with a few fowls and a garden where he and his wife can eke out their existence for the remainder of their lives. The journalist makes a bargain. If Smith will give him a full and accurate account of his life-story the necessary finances for the cottage and the fowls and so forth will be forthcoming. Only Smith must guarantee that to all other journalists his tongue shall be silent. As a result the journalist is able to write up from materials supplied at first-hand a story which for human interest and thrilling details sends his paper up to its record circulation figures, with a big cheque in his own pocket as his reward for foresight and energy. I put this forward not as high-class journalism. I consider that in spite of the enterprise, which cannot help being admired, such tendencies in newspaper development are contrary to the high standard which English journalism has always maintained, and the debasing influence on the morbid minds of certain readers cannot be lightly estimated. But I mention the incident as an example of what possibilities are open to the man who can look ahead and see copy where it is likely to exist. For, the astute journalist,

who could get hold of Smith in that manner, to the mutual advantage of his paper and himself, would be just the man who would succeed in almost any news-gathering campaign. His services would be appreciated by any paper recognising the qualities likely to produce before long a first-class news editor.

Let us consider now as to the manner in which a reporter should go about his work. Supposing he has been dispatched by his chief to a street in the City where a sudden collapse in part of the fabric of a big building has been the cause of several fatalities and more narrow escapes. When he arrives on the scene he will not stand gazing in wonder like the crowd, being kept at bay by the police. He has not come there to enjoy a free show, but to gather news for the benefit of those who were unfortunate enough not to see the spectacle for themselves. So first of all he will get to know to whom the building belonged and what kind of business was carried on therein, how it happened, what was the apparent reason, what happened as soon as the first alarm was given, what is the total loss of life and property, and the names and addresses of both dead and injured. For this purpose he will look round the crowd for some of the survivors and receive direct from eye-witnesses a vivid account of the incident. He will photograph the ambulance-workers in the act of rescuing an inmate from the débris. He will find out where the landlord lives and interview him, and finally, after inquiring at the hospital as to the progress of the rescued, he will go



back to his office replete with facts for a good "news-story."

How will he write this, presenting his facts in such a manner as to please the general reader? First of all, though he cannot guess beforehand what subsequent developments may bring about in the way of modification, nor what havoc the sub-editors may work on his hard-gotten report, he will be able to estimate roughly to what length such an incident can run. Then let him begin by going straight at the subject without any profuseness of fine writing. When the busy man opens his paper in the morning he has little time except for facts. Therefore, in his first paragraph, which need not be long, he will state that owing to a flaw in the fabric a large building containing warehouses and offices in Great Scott Street gave way yesterday at four in the afternoon, resulting in three deaths and the injury to more than a dozen persons. Having thus begun by stating the chief facts first and giving the reader a clear enunciation of what to expect, the journalist can go on filling in his story with all the picturesque details, describing the gallant rescues, the narrow escapes, the effect on the crowd as the fight went on between life and death. The value of the building, the opinions of the landlord and tenants, the complaints that had for a long time been made as to the existing danger of the building, the expert opinions of surveyors—these can all follow in their turn and make suitable copy. But all the time the reporter is writing his copy he must be working with imagination, so that



the reader will be tempted to wade through right to the last word of the account. In good, clear, expressive English, always remembering that he is writing not an official report for a Blue Book but a statement to appeal to men and women possessing human sympathy and insatiable curiosity as to what is happening to other people, the reporter will endeavour to tell a story accurately, yet simultaneously stirring up the emotions of those who read.

While it is true that so many events of every kind are always being brought before the mind of the journalist that he has every opportunity of becoming blasé, yet he must go about and endeavour to be surprised to discover some new fact or phase which he had never expected. Unless you have succeeded in interesting yourself in the news-story that you are preparing for your readers, you will only bore them by a cold, unenthusiastic recital of facts. If you have had an exciting chase to acquire your information, you are more likely, when you sit down and write your copy, to make it lively and brisk, for the reason that your interest has been quickened in the pursuit. Take a concrete instance. Supposing you are called upon suddenly to prepare an article on the making of mosaics. It might be far quicker and easier to reach down an encyclopædia and "boil down" an article into the required length. But if you called on a mosaist and had a practical demonstration of the process, you would be able to write from a fuller imagination, because you had seen for yourself what otherwise you would only have

acquired second-hand. I know that in the course of your work it is not always possible to go to the fountain-head, in which case at least go where the water is as yet unpolluted and as near to the source as possible.

## CHAPTER VI

### SOME FAMOUS FEATS IN NEWS-GATHERING

WHEN a newspaper comes out with a sensational and exclusive announcement of political or other importance, the reader whose mind is so pleasantly entertained as he sits in his comfortable chair little realises all the thrilling experiences which have been undergone in order to obtain such startling information. It is not solely by American journalists that brilliant achievements have been made in obtaining news. The "scoops" made by Englishmen on behalf of their papers will be handed down to posterity as worthy to be remembered: and as a guide to the ambitious who desire to equal if not surpass what has been already done it must not be thought out of place to give here instances of the wonderful resource and ingenuity exercised on special occasions by men to whom rebuff meant increased activity.

Perhaps the greatest — certainly one of the most distinguished — achievements in English journalism was that made by Mr. Edgar Wallace, the able war correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, in connection with the Boer War. Every one remembers the excitement which was in the minds

of people towards the end of the South African campaign. There were strong rumours going about that peace would be made, and the whole nation was on the tiptoe of excitement to know if the rumours were correct. Newspapers vied with each other to get at a definite statement.

While negotiations for peace were being carried on at a place some distance from Johannesburg, no newspaper correspondents were allowed to be anywhere in the neighbourhood, and the press censor kept a strict control over all messages sent through. Under such circumstances the old battle between the cleverness of the journalist and the discernment of the censor had to be waged the more furiously. English readers were thirsting for information, and the papers had to gratify them. It was left to Mr. Wallace and the *Daily Mail* to do this, and the following will explain how. Between the war correspondent and the *Daily Mail* was arranged an ingenious code which should not arouse the suspicions of the eagle-eyed censor. The messages were to be sent, not to the editorial offices of the *Daily Mail* in Carmelite House, but to a certain address in the city where the financial news is gathered for the paper. Moreover, the messages themselves were to have the appearance of dealing with stocks and shares, and not with war news. So the first message announcing that the Peace Conference was getting busy was sent in the following disguise: "Regarding purchase gold farm Paxfontein," ran the abbreviated telegram, "all necessary parties to contract now Pretoria



whither Alf gone get better price have every reason believe vendors wish to sell." The purport of this was understood by the people in Carmelite House to mean that all the parties connected with the peace contract were now in Pretoria, whither Lord Milner ("Alf") had gone to get the best terms, and that there was every reason to believe that the "vendors"—the Boers—would be willing for peace. This enabled the *Daily Mail* to announce to its readers that peace was probable, and within sight. But, in order to be ready to wire the result of the conference, a still more ingenious code was invented. Thus, if peace was absolutely assured, Mr. Wallace was to cable: "Have bought you 1000 Rand Collieries." If all negotiations had failed, and peace was as far off as ever, this was to be signified in the words: "Have sold 1000 Rand Collieries."

But that was only half the strategy that had to be employed to beat the censor. Before the code could be employed, the correct news had to be obtained. Correspondents being excluded from the vicinity of the conference, the negotiations were discussed more openly than would otherwise have been the case; so an arrangement was made with a soldier to post himself at a certain point along the railway line, up which Mr. Wallace was wont to travel by train each day. If peace were absolutely certain, the soldier was to wave a white handkerchief: if the negotiations were cancelled, he was to wave a blue handkerchief: if matters were inclined in the direction of failure, the colour

was to be red. At length one day Mr. Wallace saw from the train his friendly ally mopping his head with the white handkerchief, and the *Daily Mail* soon had the announcement that a thousand Rand Collieries had been bought for them, and, two days before any other paper received the tidings, it was able to announce to the world that peace had been declared.

The use of the coloured handkerchief has been adopted both before and since, though never in a case of such importance. But the reader may recollect that when the country was quite recently interested in the Druce case, and the order was made for opening the grave to see if it did or did not contain the body, a clever journalist hit upon the idea of signalling the news from a prominent height by a similar method. If the coffin were empty, the handkerchief was to be white: if it contained a body, the colour was to be red. Every one now knows that the colour was red, and that within a few minutes of the opening of the grave, the evening papers had the news in the streets.

The *Times* is not always associated by some with the effecting of "scoops," yet it has been responsible for some of the most sensational announcements made in the press. Let us give but two instances. First, there is the well-known incident of Mr. John Walter, M.P., the son of the man who founded the *Times*. One morning, early in the year 1833, whilst in the office of his paper, there arrived from Paris a message bringing the speech of Louis Philippe on the occasion of the

opening of the Chamber. But the *Times* had already long since gone to press, and been on sale, while the staff were probably in bed : at any rate they would not be back at the office for some time. But the news was what a reporter would nowadays call "red-hot," and could not possibly wait until the next day's issue appeared. What was to be done? The information had to be given to the world, and yet there was no one in the office to set it up. So, throwing aside all conventions, Mr. Walter himself took off his coat, and himself began the task of setting up the speech with his own hands. Three hours after the message had entered the office, a special edition of the paper was issued, and the news was on sale.

It would be difficult to find a precedent to the appreciation paid to the same paper for the cleverness of the "scoop" it made in the year 1841. The action of the *Times* was not merely exceedingly courageous but public-spirited. This paper has always had the good fortune of being able to obtain the best foreign news through its foreign correspondents, and the name of such men as de Blowitz and others will live in the history of modern journalism. But at this time the paper's Paris correspondent was a Mr. O'Reilly. By good luck or ingenuity the latter succeeded in obtaining secret information concerning a fraud that was to be of gigantic dimensions and was in the course of preparation on the Continent. The culprits included fourteen persons of English, French and Italian nationality, with a French baron at their head, who to a manner



of great courtesy united considerable knowledge of men and affairs. According to his plan many of the European banks would have been robbed to the extent of about a million sterling. The method included preparing a number of forged letters of credit, to present them simultaneously at the chief banks in Europe, and then to divide the money without delay.

Mr. O'Reilly knew that as soon as his newspaper was informed of the plot and the news appeared in its columns, his own life would be in jeopardy. He therefore resolved to date his letter from Brussels and not from Paris, and this is said to have warded off the violent death which the plotters would assuredly have afforded him. When the announcement appeared in the *Times* it caused a great sensation, and was the talk of the town for some time. The public were amazed at the vastness of the conspiracy, and the immediate effect was an excellent advertisement for the paper. One of the parties implicated, who was a partner in an English house in Florence, demanded the name of the informant of the *Times*, a request that was declined. A libel action followed, and the *Times* went to considerable expense to get together complete evidence for unravelling the plot, and though each side had to pay its own costs, the judgment went in favour of the *Times*.

To show their appreciation of the public service rendered by the great national newspaper, and of the large expense which it had been put to, a meeting was held and the sum of £2700 was sub-



scribed by various bankers, companies, merchants, and manufacturers, but the amount was declined by the *Times*, and the committee who had collected this sum devoted it to founding *Times* scholarships at Oxford and Cambridge, when the rest was used for putting four tablets with suitable commemorative inscriptions at the Royal Exchange, Christ's Hospital, the City of London School, and the *Times* printing office.

Quite recently the *Observer* made a clever "scoop" in connection with the crossing of the Channel by M. Blériot in his aeroplane. Every one knows that for weeks journalists had wasted time wearily waiting at Dover for the flying men that came not. Editors and readers were quickly losing patience, and the interest in the subject was vanishing, when suddenly one Sunday morning quite early, by means of wireless telegraphic plant which had been erected on either side of the Channel, the news was flashed that Blériot had started; and even before the aviator hovered into sight the journalists on the English side were kept aware of the progress by eye-witnesses on the French shore who dispatched messages every few minutes by means of wireless operators. As soon as the daring Frenchman had made his memorable descent on English soil a journalist was hurrying through Dover as fast as his motor car could carry him, and in a few minutes the aviator was interviewed and the story was ready for the paper. But the same difficulty occurred that met Mr. Walter in the incident already mentioned. It was Sunday morn-

ing, and the *Observer* would have long since gone to press and have been read through and already cast aside by most of its readers, except the lazier ones. However, the sensational tidings that at last the Channel had been crossed in an aeroplane was wired up to London, and before midday a special edition of the paper had been issued containing a long and detailed account of the event, and before lunch-time the posters announcing the incident were all over London.

There was scarcely an editor in the land who did not envy the *Daily Telegraph* for the good luck that enabled it to print the recent utterances of the German Emperor which made the whole civilised world sit up with a start as soon as it read the news so prominently displayed. But this was not the first time that the paper had made one of the biggest "scoops" known to English journalism. We mentioned above the ingenuity exercised on behalf of the *Daily Mail* by Mr. Edgar Wallace. Let us tell the tale of how the *Daily Telegraph* was able to announce the conclusion of the Boer War while the *Daily Mail* had declared that peace had been concluded, though other journals were denying it. The story deserves to be told side by side with Mr. Wallace's exploit, and is as follows. On Whit Monday, Mr. Bennet Burleigh, the *Daily Telegraph's* war correspondent, telegraphed to his paper the following message :—

"Whitsuntide Greetings."

The dispatch was duly received in Fleet Street, but there did not seem to be much point in wasting

money in sending polite but unnecessary cablegrams at expensive rates. Still, after a time it occurred to some one that the symbolical expression of Whitsuntide in the Eastern Church was a dove, representing Peace. But on so slender a surmise the editorial authorities did not feel inclined to say more. "We turned, however," said the *Daily Telegraph* in relating the incident, "to the Prayer Book—knowing Mr. Burleigh to be well acquainted with Holy Writ—and reading over the Gospel for Whit Sunday, the date of the dispatch, we came upon the following sentences :—

" ' Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you : not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, nether let it be afraid.' "

" Even then we did not feel justified in coming to a fixed conclusion. But when we received Mr. Burleigh's message to his brother in Glasgow—' Returning : tell Lawson '—we felt that the moment had arrived when we might fairly take the public into our confidence." It was this same correspondent who made the record for the longest dispatch ever sent by cable, in his account of the battle of Liao-Yang. The message ran to no less than 20,000 words, or about a quarter of the length of an average novel.

The ingenuity of the reporter was considerably taxed during the visit of the Boer generals to London seven years ago. These gentlemen had very wisely declined to be interviewed, and any direct method of approaching them was obviously



out of the question. On such occasions as this the news-gatherer has to pursue his object in a roundabout manner, and the way in which one of the generals was interviewed without his knowing gave both himself and the public something of a surprise the next morning. Told briefly, the story includes the General, a reporter, and a tailor, whose place of business was not a thousand miles from Fleet Street. It was known that during the course of the day the General was to visit the tailor for some new clothes, and so the reporter who had been entrusted with the task of interviewing the distinguished Boer arranged with the tailor to be allowed to act as his assistant. Consequently, when the General came into the shop, and the "assistant" stood at attention, the book into which he inscribed the measurements that were presently shouted out to him was, in fact, to contain valuable shorthand notes. After each measurement, the tailor advanced to his assistant, and looked into his book on the plea of ensuring that accuracy had been used to take down the figures; but, as a fact, it was for the purpose of enabling the tailor to read the next questions which the reporter had written out clearly in legible longhand. Whilst the South African was being measured, the tailor would throw out a casual question as to what the General thought of England, of Mr. Chamberlain, of the English Army, and of other matters of great interest. All the time the reporter was busy taking down the replies, and chuckling to himself on the wonderful "scoop"



he was making. Whenever the tailor was at a loss for a question, he would walk across and consult the reporter's book, and return with another point of conversation to be going on with. The interview had been managed beautifully, and the paper owed to the tailor a deep sense of gratitude for the success with which the article was received the next morning.

"Scoops" of an entirely different kind were those achieved respectively by the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *Times*, in announcing the resignation of two of the most prominent politicians of their time. When, on a certain day in December, the latter contained a short paragraph with a single heading, quietly announcing the "Resignation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer," and continued in the same restrained manner for a few more lines, the effect on the country was electric. Lord Randolph, in his own impetuous manner, had called a cab, driven to the offices of the *Times*, and informed the editor even before the Premier himself was aware of the fact. But even this news was surpassed by the *Pall Mall's* deliberate statement concerning the resignation of Mr. Gladstone. The news was denied vehemently, but it was true none the less, as every one now knows. The advertisement which the *Pall Mall* received as a result was anything but small. The price paid for this valuable and exclusive item of news is believed to have been £500, and there are not many papers in the kingdom that would not willingly have paid all that and more for such a startling announcement. Nor ought one to forget in this age, when "scoops"

are more frequent than formerly, the enterprise of the *Daily Telegraph* and the *New York Herald*, who joined forces to find Dr. Livingstone. The story is stale now that when the whole world wondered what had become of the great man, Sir (then Mr.) H. M. Stanley was dispatched to find the man, when all other attempts had failed. But in those days the paper that could go to such trouble to ascertain a certain piece of news was the kind that had no difficulty in keeping up its number of readers.

It is fitting to end this recital of the clever attempts which have been made by journalists to get at facts by recording a feat in news-gathering that was from beginning to end fraught with exceptional difficulties, in which good luck was an absent element. To the *New York World* belongs the honour of having been the first journal in the world to publish the full news of the historic disaster which occurred, owing to the collision of H.M.S. *Victoria* and *Camperdown*, during the naval manœuvres which were being carried out in the Mediterranean in 1893. It was, in fact, from America that the news reached England, after being sent on by the paper's London correspondent. Up till then the bare, bald fact had reached New York and London that the collision had taken place, and that a disaster of the first magnitude had occurred. The subject was one that instantly prepared editors for a good long "story" of the details of the tragedy. But the next day there was no further news at hand: the English "dailies" knew nothing, and there

was no official news from the Admiralty. Meanwhile into the London office of the *New York World* came an urgent demand from its New York editor for details of the disaster. The London correspondent, Mr. D. G. Phillips, set to work to gather information, yet received nothing but the statement that to gratify his request was impossible. There was no correspondent on the coast off which the vessel had gone down, and there was nothing to be done but to wait the coming of authoritative news. But, to Mr. Phillips' credit, let it be said that so much cold discouragement only gave him greater enthusiasm to get the "beat." He discovered that fifty miles away from the point of the coast which had witnessed the disaster was a cable station. Thereupon he made his way to the London general manager of the cable line, explained that a big "story" would shortly be occupying his line, and begged that he might have permission to commission the cable operator at the other end to travel the fifty miles along the coast, get the news and cable it along. The London correspondent thereupon cabled to the native operator that he would pay him for details of the disaster. That would have been all right, but the reply came back that the man had no details. In due time, determined not to be outdone, the New Yorker again cabled the operator to charter a boat and go in search of information, at the same time offering to pay one hundred pounds sterling for the work. A short significant answer came back, asking first for money for the boat, and eventually

the money was sent off, and in return there came back a long account full of the sad and terrible details of one of the greatest misfortunes that ever happened to a Navy in times of peace. But it was to the resourceful pertinacity of the representative of a foreign paper that the country owed the first announcement of its own exceeding great loss.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE DUTIES OF AN EDITOR

WE turn now from the consideration of the news-gatherer to the news-fashioner, the editor.

It is incumbent on the editor of every kind of paper, whether daily, weekly or monthly, to obtain the most timely articles from the very best sources. What is of immediate or forthcoming interest is to him of far greater value than the most interesting matter which has already passed. The editor has to be endowed with, or at any rate to acquire something of, the attributes of a prophet. He must from the trend of events be able to conclude what is likely to be an ultimate conclusion. He must be able at once to anticipate what will happen and to what extent his public will be interested. To this end he will gather round him the best journalists with the news-instinct prominently manifested in their methods of work. As a position of responsibility, that of an editor has few equals. He is responsible to his proprietors for the progress of his journal as a money-making business: he is responsible to his readers for the continuance of popularity, and he has the very difficult task of handling his staff and his outside contributors in

such a manner that the best contributions come in without reckless and unnecessary expense. It is easy enough to state bluntly what is expected of an editor : those who have for years endeavoured to carry out all that is required of them will tell you that in practice the problem is no easy one. On a daily paper the efficiency of news-service makes a great difference, and with the systematic separation into departments, each controlled by a news editor, a foreign editor, a literary editor, a magazine editor, and so on, the work of the editor himself is chiefly that of supervising and organising whenever the occasion demands it. He is always on the look out for new men and new ideas : he has the confidence and ear of politicians and leading statesmen : by the position which his paper occupies and has held for many years, by its close relation to certain parties as the organ of especial interests and movements, it is in a specially favourable position for the inducement of news. Even when we come down to the more practical side of finally making the paper up for press, this, nowadays, consequent on the advance of specialisation and subdivision of labour, is less in the control of the editor than of one man whose chief duty consists in seeing that the paper each morning looks like a live organ : who sees that nothing is further away from its appearance than dulness. So many matters demand the attention of the editor of a daily paper that without a system of this sort it would be impossible to carry on the work satisfactorily.

But it is when we come to the weeklies and monthlies

that we find a less complete service arranged. The circulations of these being smaller, and the value of advertisement matter less considerable also, it follows all round that the expense which can be allowed in connection with the production and distribution of a daily cannot be entertained here, notwithstanding that the selling price of the journal is greater than if it were issued daily. The relation which the editor of a weekly or monthly bears to his paper is therefore more personal and closer. He has more time for social intercourse than the editor of a paper that must at all costs appear each day, and so keen is the competition for the best matter nowadays, that a very serious part of the time of a magazine editor consists in coming in contact with the best writers and securing direct their promises of contributions. When he would prefer to dine quietly at home and to browse among his own books, he is compelled to attend a semi-public dinner because he knows that he will be seated next to a new author whose next book would make an excellent serial for his magazine. He has not the staff for news-gathering possessed by the editor of a daily, and so he must go out into the byways and hedges himself. Literary agents pour in floods of manuscript of all kinds, only a part of which he has ever time to peruse himself, and but a small fraction of which is at all suitable. Of the rest much is instantly rendered useless owing to the excessive terms sometimes demanded. In place of these disappointments your magazine editor has to create, if not articles, at least the ideas on which the

articles shall be based. He has to persuade unwilling public men—men to whom authorship does not come naturally nor temptingly—to contribute to his columns. The young author with lack of experience but brilliant ideas he has to encourage until he is an acquisition: in the meantime the editing of his MSS and the curbing of his eccentricities waste a good deal of valuable time. The old-fashioned idea, still resting securely in the minds of many magazine readers, that the editor sits in his luxurious office comfortably and peacefully engaged all day in reading interesting MSS, and easily deciding which of these shall fill his magazine, ought to have been long since exploded. It is rare that he gets a chance of the quietude essential for such a task. If he is wise he will glance first at the ideas, then at the style in which the idea is presented, and finally hand the selected batch to his sub-editor or assistant for further selection. Then after all the scores of callers have left him in peace, and the next issue of his magazine is well under way, he may have time and opportunity to go carefully through the pick of the large basket. I know of one editor, responsible for one of the best magazines, who confessed that he made it a plan to read one out of every ten of the MSS submitted to him. From a contributor's point of view this may at first seem unfair: had the editor nothing else to do but to read contributions the criticism would be justifiable.

Far more would the editor be likely to be of use to you if you first submitted a rough outline, or at least the naked idea on which you propose to write. I



am speaking, of course, in generalities. Exceptions occur to disprove what has been said. For among the anxieties and worries of an editor few things I suppose afford him more pleasure than to discover among the mass of typewritten contributions one which is so good, so original and of such a length as to be recognised immediately as suitable for his pages. A line of encouragement is written to the contributor. He may be asked to call, and the columns will always be open as long as he can turn out matter of the same kind.

The most seductive danger into which an editor is likely to fall is that of monotony. A magazine must not be in monotone, but in polychrome. That is to say, it must not for ever be harping on the same subject. Variety is the soul of a magazine—in matter, in appearance, in make-up, in contributor and contribution. The tendency of magazines, like the tendency of human nature and all business concerns, too, is ever in the direction of the downgrade. Nothing stands still even in magazine circulation. Either it is going down, or, by your enterprise and good luck, it is going up. In your mind you must have your magazine planned out three months ahead, but in such a manner that at the last moment you can re-adapt it for the inclusion of some new “red-hot” matter that has just issued from the fiery furnace of the world’s events. The surest way to effect decreased sales is staleness; and, however good and however novel an idea you may have, if you run it one issue beyond the endurance of the reader, it will

do the magazine immediate harm. But let it be remembered that not all the efforts of the cleverest and most enterprising editor can make a magazine succeed while the business side of the periodical is being badly conducted. It is not enough to provide a continuous feast for the reader. Advertising, pushing, obtaining the interest of the trade, displaying the magazine prominently at all the bookstalls—these cannot be excluded from the essentials to making a periodical a prosperous concern. More than one good magazine has been cast upon the rocks owing to bad management totally unconnected with the editorial department.

After an editor has selected from the mass of manuscripts before him, he makes up a skeleton outline of what his next number will be. His "big scoop" will open the magazine with perhaps an illustration confronting it as frontispiece. He decides which of his matter is deserving of prominence, which shall be relegated to the position of "fill-ups." With the subject-titles before him, and the illustrations that are to accompany the matter, he is able to form an adequate idea as to what his number will look like. If it seems to lack variety, humour or matter of immediate interest, then he will proceed to correct such faults. At last, having satisfied himself that the literary contents will be attractive, the MSS are sent down to the printers, the editor having corrected them to his purpose, and having marked at the top of each in what type the compositor is to set the copy up. In the meantime, he takes in hand the illus-

trations, measures these for reproduction, sends for the blockmaker, and instructs him accordingly. Photographs may require retouching by the blockmaker's artist, borders may be painted in, vignettes may be added, or deftly modified, so as to break through the marginal rule and increase the attractiveness of the page. Is the photograph to be given a deep wash-border such as will suit reproductions, for example, of landscapes? Or, again, shall it have a thin, thick or medium rule round it? And finally, what shape is it to be given? These points, scarcely noticeable to the general reader as he turns carelessly over the pages of his magazine, have all had to be carefully thought out by the editor beforehand.

Illustrations come in of all sizes, but they have to be reduced in such a manner as to be confined within the dimensions of the magazine page. It happens more frequently that a picture needs reducing than enlarging. In order to discover what size your block will be, all that you have to do is to decide what width you desire your original to be reduced to. Then, taking a sheet of paper or another ruler, place it on the original so as to form a diagonal. Next, take your measurement and let one end touch the diagonal and the other the extremity of the original. Then the difference between where your rule touches the extremity of the original, and the extreme point below of the other dimension will give you the size which you want to know. For instance, supposing you have an original measuring  $6\frac{1}{2}$  in. in breadth and 4 in.



deep. You wish to reduce this to the width of your page, which we will suppose is only 5 in. wide. What space in depth will your block then occupy? Having made a diagonal with a ruler or straight line of paper, you take your ruler and measure off 5 in. from the point where the ruler touches the diagonal to the right hand extremity of the original. Make a pencil mark at this right-hand side. Then, if you measure from that mark to the foot of the original also on the right hand, you will find that it is 3 in., which is the depth to which your original will, when it comes up from the engraver's, be reduced. Thus, instead of an original  $6\frac{1}{2}$  by 4 it will appear in your magazine as 5 by 3.

Another point which the editor has to take into account is what is technically known among block-makers as the "screen." Without confusing the reader with an unnecessary amount of detail, which can only be learned by witnessing the whole process of engraving, it may be pertinent to explain that roughly the process consists in photographing the original sketch or photograph on to a gelatine surface, which, being placed on to copper, and then left in a bath of acid, eventually exhibits the image of the original burned in. The copper is subsequently backed with wood and dispatched to the printers, who place it in position among the type in accordance with the editor's suggestions. Now, when the original was photographed, it was done through a remarkably fine screen, so that when the block came out of the bath it contained these extremely delicate lines. This was done



for technical reasons which we need not now enter, but it is sufficient to know that for a highly glazed supercalendered paper, such as is used for high-class art illustrations and some of the magazines, a "screen" of 175 or 150, splitting the object photographed into so many tiny squares to the inch, would be used. Where an inferior, rough kind of paper, such as is used for the publications of a cheaper sort, is used, a corresponding coarser screen would be adopted. These technicalities must be observed, or the illustrations will appear unsatisfactorily; nor will the fault lie with the printer, but with you, for having wrongly instructed the engraver.

Having therefore marked on the backs of the illustrations the respective sizes to which they are to be reduced and the number of the "screen," in due course "rough pulls" will be submitted by the engraver and finally the finished "good proofs." On comparing these with the originals you will be able to detect any errors, where a line has been lost, where the effects of light and shade have not been given their full value, and so on. As soon as you have had these alterations made, the blocks are sent down to the printer. Meanwhile you will have received from the compositors the MSS you sent them to be set up. These will now appear in long slips called galley-proofs. After the author of each contribution has returned his corrected proofs and you have added yours, the "galleys" are returned to the printer and a "revise" comes back to you instead. With these, and the proofs

of the illustrations, you set to work to build up your magazine according to the architecture you had in mind and the amount of artistic taste which you possess. You will have seen that the titles of your articles have an attractive appearance both as to matter and the type in which they have been set up. You will not overcrowd your pages with illustrations, nor spoil an otherwise good effect by unhappy juxtaposition. Having pasted your galley-proofs and engraver's "pulls" to form the pages of your magazine, you may find a few inches to spare at the bottom of the article, which you can fill up with a few verses of a poem or an illustration. In the same way as you have built up one article with its illustrations you will proceed with your other matter until the whole magazine stands before you as a nearly finished house without the paint and the windows put in. So you send this rough "make-up," as it is called, down to the printer, who arranges the type he has set up and the blocks already sent down in the manner directed, and the proofs come back made-up in page form with the illustrations in their correct place. Finally, after satisfying yourself that the contents seem to have an air of "immediate interest" and that the arrangement of the articles could not be improved, you take a last look through lest any slips of pen, errors of judgment, or libels should have dropped in, and your next number is passed for press.

If we were to go down to the printer's we should see where the moulds were made and were eventually taken to the machines to be printed "on the flat,"

as it is technically called. The reader will recollect that a daily newspaper, where speed is of the first consideration and excellence of printing only of secondary import, is printed on what are called "rotary" machines. But in the production of a magazine greater care is expended from an artistic point of view, and the closest attention is paid to the printing of the sheets. A magazine is composed, like a book, of so many separate sheets or "signatures," a signature being a collection of sixteen, thirty-two, or sixty-four pages—any multiple, in fact, of eight. If you look at the right-hand page you will often find at the bottom that it is numbered alphabetically at the beginning of each signature. Both sides of the paper having been printed, the sheets are folded to the size of the magazine, stitched, and made ready for the cover into which by an ingenious mechanical device they are gummed. Finally, a cutting machine called a "guillotine" trims off the edges and the magazine is all ready for the market.

Long before you have sent down your internal matter to the printer you will have arranged for the coloured cover to go outside the magazine. You will have arranged with an artist, in consideration of any sum from about three guineas upwards, to make you a design in two or three colours according as you determine. The back of the cover will be used for advertising purposes, but this will be the concern of the manager of that department. The importance of colour work in journalism cannot be denied, and this importance in the opinion of



those best able to judge is quickly increasing. One magazine already has long since inaugurated colour into its literary pages, and with the perfection of printing methods it may not be long before its use is as universal as illustrations generally. It is therefore undeniable that a knowledge, however slight, of colour work should be included in the training of a journalist who hopes some day to become editor. In the fewest words it is sufficient to say here that the principle involved is roughly as follows: By using two colours only, as for instance a blue and a brown, one is able to get the effects of sky and earth. First the printing is done in say blue alone, and then the brown is printed on the top of that. Therefore one gets not merely the blues and browns but the colour which is produced by a combination of the two, which could form the colour of trees or whatever was in the picture. In the case of three-colour work, by a combination of three of the primary colours, all the other colours of a prism can be obtained by the three printings. Leaving out lithography, which is another process altogether, your coloured covers and frontispieces will be obtained by using copper blocks, the manufacture of which has already been described above, and is known as the half-tone process. But not all your illustrations will be reproduced by the half-tone process. Some will come to you drawn in line, in which case a simpler process, necessitating no "screen" but where the block is made of zinc instead of copper, will be employed. Of such a kind were all the illustrations



appearing in the daily papers until the recent improvement in half-tone rendered the latter process more practicable. As regards cost it is cheaper to make line blocks in the same proportion as twopence bears to fivepence. In many of the modern magazines it is now customary, especially in America, to employ two kinds of paper: one of a superior glazed kind on which to print the half-tones, and the other, which approximates more closely to drawing paper, being more suitable for line blocks.

It is entirely outside the scope of this book to afford a complete knowledge of the technicalities of printing or reproduction; these can only be acquired by a practical experience in such departments. But it has been thought to be not out of place to give here a vague outline of the conditions which govern the more practical side of journalism, so that the inexperienced journalist may realise beforehand in what direction a knowledge of printing and its kindred industries may be of advantage.

In the case of a weekly paper, the organisation for obtaining news and illustrations will in all probability be superior to that of a monthly magazine. It will have what some magazines possess—definite, regular features, as for instance literary sections, an article on the drama, fashions for women, and so on. If there is no staff of artists working exclusively for the paper, at least there will be a number who work more or less regularly for the paper. If the weekly paper is one of those which is purely literary or partly political as well, the

amount of work involved in getting it to press and editing generally is not so great as if it were an illustrated periodical. The make-up will be simpler, as there are no illustrations to be taken into consideration, and the cost of production will be correspondingly smaller. But the position of the weekly journal nowadays is none too bright, and even the most optimistic person would admit that with the development of the daily journals and the introduction of photographs reproduced within a few hours of the actual event, not merely in morning but in evening papers as well, the popularity of some of the weekly journals has waned considerably.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ARTICLE WRITING

AFTER you have carefully analysed the subject for your article you have really done half the work of creating the contribution. But if you sit down and endeavour to let the article work itself out as you write it will lose much of its force and power, whilst there will be deficiencies and repetitions. But not only will you consider the subject about which you are going to write : you will also have in mind the nature of your public, what its dislikes and preferences are, whether you are writing for their instruction or for their amusement.

Let your subject be clearly defined at the outset, so that your reader knows at once what you are about to perform. As you proceed you will accentuate your points by contrast ; you will clear away all misunderstanding by illustration and example, and so succeed in emphasising your main issue. But all the time you will not forget, whilst you keep count of the subsidiary points, the importance of that principle which is summed up in the little word "unity." This, indeed, is one of the most conspicuous rules for success in play-writing, but it is equally a condition to be observed in connection

with article writing, and, in fact, all literary composition. Nevertheless, when so many ideas crowd into your mind as you write it is not always easy to preserve this quality.

But whatever you write upon, and for whatever public or periodical, aim above all things at clearness and sincerity. The aim of the American writer who summed up this point in the following lines is expressed with no little force :—

“Not like Homer would I write,  
Not like Dante if I might,  
Not like Shakespeare at his best,  
Not like Goethe or the rest.  
Like myself, however small,  
Like myself, or not at all.”

If you are seeking to instruct, there must be no ambiguity in what you write, and unless you have first cleared your mind, you cannot expect others to follow you clearly, for instead of making friends and adding to your popularity as a writer, you only make to yourself enemies. One so often receives into the office of a newspaper or periodical a manuscript full of good things, with excellent material and plenty of it, but so badly arranged and thought-out as to forfeit half of its value. The author has obviously been overcome by his subject, instead of having himself mastered it.

It is useful to remember that in giving instances the concrete is, whenever possible, preferable to the abstract, and the human to the inanimate, the present to the past. Argument by analogy can be



very powerful and convincing, but care must be taken that only a suitable analogy is selected : otherwise you weaken rather than strengthen your argument. Nor will you omit to preserve a sense of proportion. The greatest offenders against this rule are the lady journalists. To let your enthusiasm run away with your reason, is to show yourself incompetent to impart sound information to others. For, however interested you may be, you are writing not so much for your own pleasure as for that of your reader. And for this reason take care that you make the beginning of your article interesting. By far the most important parts of your contribution are the beginning and the ending. At all costs your beginning *must* be attractive, otherwise you run the risk of too quickly satisfying the reader and the editor, and they will speedily throw it aside as being too dull. The conclusion of your essay or article must be equally well done, otherwise the virtues of the beginning are minimised. If the commencement of the article be interesting, its ending should be powerful and impressive.

Again, let your article hang well together : let it have a strong backbone. Do not shirk any objections that there may be to your argument : enumerate them and meet them. Into your style infuse variety, as to words and expression, illustrations, comparison, and the length of your sentences and paragraphs. And with regard to your sentences further, let them be rhythmic, like the long deep-sea waves that roll on with majesty and power : not like the nasty short seas which break close in to the

shore. Short, crisp sentences have their use occasionally, but they soon become monotonous.

In the midst of your writing stop sometimes to ask yourself the question—"Am I boring or interesting the reader? Am I too complex or skipping too rapidly from point to point? Am I keeping up the interest of the reader, or am I sending him to sleep?" The more carefully you have thought out your subject beforehand, the less work will you have in writing it out, and the more lively and interesting it will be to the reader. Many writers find it an excellent plan to write out the skeleton of their article the night before, so that on the morrow it is there ready to be clothed with the right words. This is preferable to making both analysis and article on the same day, and the interval left will probably be fruitful in supplying additional ideas and modifications, whilst at the same time better illustrations and examples may accrue.

At the same time let the journalist remember that he is not writing an exhaustive treatise, but an essay—an *attempt*. He sets out not to tell everything known on the subject, but just so many details as are of interest to the general reader, who is not a specialist in this subject. His style will not, therefore, be that of the didactic expert, but of one who is having a pleasant chat on a subject of mutual interest. For determining his subject the writer of popular articles has the whole world to select from, and as he looks around he will ask himself which of the many thousand phases of existence are capable of being used for this purpose,

which especially will lend themselves to treatment in accordance with the limitations of the periodical. There are more ways than one of commencing an article in such a way as to command interest from the first. You may, for instance, start off with an anecdote, a witty remark, a striking quotation. This method is rarely ineffective, but it has the defects of its qualities, for the danger lies in avoiding an anti-climax: the opening may have been so good that the ensuing paragraphs may be disappointing. In the absence of especially striking matter, it is a good plan to begin, not with a long paragraph, but one consisting of only a sentence. Then after this you can continue with your matter in the usual way. The more terse and crisp your opening sentence is, so much the more likely is your article to be read.

It ought not to be necessary to point out the importance of sending in your MS typewritten. But so many contributors still continue to post illegible matter to editorial offices, giving themselves and busy editors unnecessary trouble; for if you will picture to yourself what your own choice would be if each day a torrent of paper came pouring into your office, some neatly typewritten, the rest written in all sorts of hands, you will quickly realise why some MSS are sent back without even being read. If the contributor has so little faith in his article that he does not consider it worth while to have it typed out, then it is not probable that an editor is going to be prejudiced in its favour. As illustrating the harm which a writer is capable of



doing to himself, it is not out of place to mention the case of an author who is now well known and has achieved within a short time both fame and considerable financial remuneration. The first attempt by this author consisted of a long MS not typewritten but in a trying and tedious hand. To make all possibilities of success remote the author had written the matter in an unattractive blue ink, which made the legibility of the manuscript still more difficult. Back came the contribution from first one publisher and another, each time the pages becoming more and more soiled. Nobody seemed to want it, until at last, after it had completed almost the entire round of publishers' offices, when it had begged on nearly every doorstep, it was accepted and the result was immediate. Later on, amid the blaze of applause which the book caused, one of the readers by whom it had been refused was asked how it was he came to commit such an error of judgment. His reply was that the colour of the ink and the general unattractiveness so thoroughly sapped his patience that he could not go on with it.

Nor is it sufficient merely to enclose a stamped envelope if you desire the return of your manuscript in the case of its not being accepted. On a blank page preceding, but attached to your contribution, let your name be placed conspicuously with your address. The reason of this is that among the multiplicity of manuscripts yours is likely to become separated from its addressed envelope, and considerable time may have to be



wasted in reconciling the fugitive article to its envelope. At the beginning state how many words the article contains. Some writers also give a brief outline of the contents of the contribution. This enables the editor to see at a glance whether the matter is on the right lines. It is not necessary to accompany your contribution with a long biographical letter. Let it be short, if you send one at all, businesslike and to the point. It is the article which the editor wants—not your biography, and the contribution is judged entirely on its own merits. But if you should happen to have been in a special position for acquiring the facts of your article, or you should be a recognised expert on the subject, it is permissible to state this briefly, as it will be valued by both the editor and the readers. Every editor and magazine or newspaper reader is asking for something new to be told them, something exciting or striking, and if you have it in you to tell them and can tell it attractively, it matters little who you are or how many times you have written elsewhere, for you are trying to help an inadequate supply and meet an overwhelming demand. And for this reason as you go about and see, hear or read anything of exceptional interest likely to lend itself to journalistic treatment, let it not slip through your fingers, but nail it down at once: it may be worth several guineas to you in due time.

## CHAPTER IX

### FICTION WRITING

THE demand for a certain class of newspaper or magazine article varies according to the contemporary happenings of the planet in which we live. During the Russo-Japanese War there was a big market for those who had visited the East and could write interesting matter about it. Journals and magazines of every kind contained innumerable contributions on the Japanese and their country. Books followed, and as long as the war was at its highest the demand for suitable copy went on unabated. But the moment that peace was declared came the inevitable slump for Japanese copy. The same conditions are applicable to most kinds of articles. Fashions change quickly and popularity is but shortlived.

But when we come to the department of fiction we find that such a law does not prevail. As long as human nature remains what it is there will always be a demand for stories both long and short. Express the fact in whatever terms you prefer, there always has been and there always will be an audience ready to listen to a story not necessarily founded on fact but having sufficient relation to

human life and experience to appear credible. One may attribute this to the same two causes which we mentioned above—the inherent sympathy of mankind towards the sorrows and joys of others and their curiosity in witnessing the result. Consider for a moment your own attitude in reading a novel or witnessing a play of serious interest. Having once become interested in a number of people which the dramatist or novelist has introduced to your attention, you are curious to know how it will all end : you are sympathetically interested in the chequered careers of hero and heroine. Indeed, unless the playwright has succeeded in making his creatures live before your eyes, unless they seem to you to be *real* people, you lose all enthusiasm for the play.

Such being one aspect of human nature, the demand for fiction can never be completely met. Whenever the supply of articles of general interest may be greater than the demand, there is always a steady market for stories, both short and long. That statement is true generally, but at the present time it is even more true than usually, for, owing to the introduction of the all-fiction magazine first in the United States and subsequently in England, the financial outlook for the fiction writer is anything but dull. It is all the more striking that this should be so when, owing to the introduction of the sixpenny, sevenpenny and the shilling novel, most novelists are complaining of decreased sales and consequently smaller royalties. One author possessing a high reputation as a novelist confesses that he recently spent a whole year in

writing a novel which, though it was well reviewed and widely discussed, brought him in a remuneration only at the rate of £1, 7s. per thousand words, a singularly low standard of reward for one skilled in his craft. But in the following year, when the boom of the short story came, and editors began to pay high prices for good fiction, the novelist found that within one year his income was over £1000 through writing short stories alone. The reason is attributable to the fact that the demand is greater than the supply. I suppose it is the experience of every editor—certainly it is mine and of many others—that one of the most difficult things to find is a regular and continuous supply of good, readable short stories. Even if an editor discovers an unknown writer, he—or more usually she—will in the course of about three years have written himself out of short tales. If he is writing at all he will most probably have since taken to the making of novels. The reply that is usually given is that short-story writing is too prodigal with ideas and plots; that the same germ which produced a story could also be utilised for a long novel; finally, that the reward for the novel, though the work was greater, justified the inattention paid to short-story writing. However true that may have been until quite recently, the new conditions have shown that the remuneration to be obtained from short stories is a sufficiently tempting one to draw writers of fiction away from their novels and to engage their time in painting pictures of smaller dimensions.



In England the cult of the short story has been somewhat neglected. They do this thing much better in France and the United States. It is an art that is not quite so easy as may at first sight appear. You must within a minimum space tell out the whole of your story, introduce your characters, supply atmosphere and finally end off the incident. For it must not be thought that a short story is a condensed novel, any more than a miniature painted on ivory is just a small-sized portrait. The two crafts of writing a novel and a short story respectively are not identical, although in most respects they come under the same heading. In a novel your plot is formed of a string of incidents: in the short story it is chiefly of one particular incident that you treat. In many respects, owing to the difficulties of compression and the small opportunities at your disposal for drawing, in unmistakable lines, the delineations of your characters, the short story is more difficult than the novel. It is so, indeed, to certain minds; to a mind that is orderly and delights in novel-architecture, in building up plot and counterplot, the short story does not afford the same chances as the larger landscape in which the building is to be erected.

And yet to many people the short story comes like the "curtain-lifter" to the ambitious yet not wholly experienced playwright. It presents a chance of showing on a small scale the ability to tell a tale, to put on paper the creatures that have lived in your brain. It is a test as to whether you possess sufficient imagination, inventiveness, and the

capacity to express yourself according to literary canons. Style, of course, cannot be obtained at once : it comes as a combination of your own mind and the influence which has been exercised on it by reading sound literature. You will have no desire to foist on to yourself the style of any one writer, for originality and sincerity will be two of your chief aims : but by reading a multiplicity of good authors, you find, when the time comes, that you begin to express yourself in a style which is peculiar to yourself which yet has some literary merit. But what kind of a short story are you going to write ? If you are wise, and desire to see your story in print, you will be influenced by the kind of matter for which there is a demand. The smart, epigrammatic story, insincere and untrue to life as it was, has had its day and gone. But there is a wide demand for a story that is dramatic—even melodramatic, full of incident, emotion and pathos. Perhaps this does not represent the highest class of literary craftsmanship : at any rate it produces a story with a backbone, which the more subtle type did not possess. Even if it exaggerates life, and crowds more into one phase, yet it is all on the right side. But unless you have the dramatic sense and instinct this kind of story is not your work, and you had better leave it alone.

If you would write a modern love story you must, in the words of an editor in charge of one of the more popular journals, “ make it positively throb with emotion, have at least one dramatic situation and end up with a happy finale.” If yours is a story not

of love but of adventure your chief aim is in the direction of realism. Keep the action going quickly all the time; avoid by skilful arrangement any gap—any sudden hiatus of dulness after an exciting passage. We live in an exciting age, when men and women have so much to exercise their minds in their daily round of work, that when they take leisure in fiction they have little or no inclination towards the soft, smooth story which would have appealed to our early Victorian ancestors. The popularity of the detective story and of the detective play, as in the case of *Raffles*, *Arsène Lupin* and others of the same genre, must be attributed to the amount of excitement produced rather than to excellence of technical skill in treatment or the relation which the characters bear to the people one meets with every day. Perhaps in no story will you find your inventive ability more surely taxed than in constructing a detective story, but if you can but obtain only a moderate ability, you will be not disappointed; for almost any of the magazines of popular interest will be glad to buy as many stories of this kind as you can turn out.

But whatever kind of story you decide to specialise in—love, adventure, character sketch, humorous, dramatic or almost exclusively dialogue, let your aim be clearly established in your mind before you set forth. Your first duty above all is to wrest for a short time the whole and undivided attention of the reader's sympathies, his emotions and goodwill. You can increase the telling power of your story by the excellence of your style, the



reality of your atmosphere, the adroitness of your situations. These, in fact, are not to be considered as mere accidents but essentials of the story. But first and foremost do not begin until you have something good to tell, something that will interest him and not bore him. Do not, like the most casual of amateurs, start building without a clear plan of your work before you, knowing just where you are going to begin and how the story will end. There must be design in short-story writing as in every other art. The first part must be really the introduction in which the reader gets familiarised with the chief person in your story—his or her characteristics, environment, and physical appearance. This will be done very skilfully, by suggestion rather than direct statement, by slight touches than heavy daub of paint. Having shown these you will work the story up to the climax—the pivot of the problem. Finally you will, step by step, unravel the problem, being here especially careful not to be guilty of the anti-climax, and end up with, if possible, a pleasant surprise for the reader.

But before you can sit down to your pen and paper you must get the idea for your story. How will you find it? The germ will come not from your own mind as from observation. "First and before everything else," said the late Sir Walter Besant in a lecture, before the Royal Institution, on the Art of Fiction, "there is the rule that everything in Fiction which is invented, and is not the result of personal experience and observation is useless." And when we praise an author or dramatist for his



inventive ability we are applauding really hisuteness of observation, his success in finding a less commonplace solution or situation to follow on what has gone before in his story. Every issue of a daily paper contains a mass of story-germs. They await only your fulness of imagination to develop them, and your constructive and literary ability to put them before the reader in their correct shape and form. Suppose you pick up your morning paper and find an account of a breach of promise action. Long before the girl was driven through hate and wounded feelings to such a course she loved the man. Can you not picture in your imagination the clashing of wills in the big scene enacted out of court when the struggle went on between the girl's love and the man's duplicity? She is determined to hold him for her own: he is anxious to pursue another course. On the one side all the tact, ingenuity and self-devotion of the woman: on the other a determination that these shall exercise no sway over him. Is it not possible, then, for the short-story writer, having reconstructed such a part of the narrative as might have happened, to put it down on paper, using fictitious characters, and in such a way as to hold the interest, the sympathies and emotions of the reader?

But it is not always the first or second idea that will be found suitable. If the short-story writer be wise, he will keep a file of all the cuttings suggestive of story-germs. When the time comes he may have to reject a good many of them as being beyond treatment, but there may be some which admirably

serve his purpose. Only he must see to it that the persons of the drama actually live in his own mind. Without this condition they cannot seem real to the reader. They will be at best, lifeless, colourless, just pegs on which to string a series of conversations. But having selected a workable idea and convinced yourself as to its beginning and end, write down on half a sheet of paper in the simplest words an outline of the story and the characteristics of your hero and heroine and any others that may appear in your narrative, being attentive to see that due regard has been paid to contrast and order of progress. In a few lines, when you begin to write the story in its finished form, you will by characteristic and distinctive remarks, by denoting gestures, ominous silences, and other results of observations indicate in no uncertain manner the attributes of your men and women to whom you are directing attention. Here, again, as in all branches of art, the quality of selection enters. It is both useless and inartistic to describe all that you see. You will not give a *detailed* list of the virtues, vices and physical appearances of your characters, nor of the clothes and jewellery they have on. From all that you see you will select just those which you would see at first glance if you were suddenly confronted with these persons. And again, out of those you would choose only such as tended to the more complete development of your story and the exposition of the nature and environment of your people. Thus, to take a simple instance, when the villain of the story enters the room call attention to the hardness of his cruel

brown eyes, the unsympathetic, massive jaw and the shiny black hair, but avoid giving at once a complete description of the man. As you proceed in your narrative you can deftly scatter a remark, record an action or a reply from his mouth which will go much further to convince a reader than any other method which fiction allows. Note the way in which he walks across the room. There is as much character in a person's walk as in his speech. Observe, also, how he seats himself in the most comfortable chair and fails to pat the dog which gets up from the fire and comes inquisitively to his side. Your reader does not desire, either, a fashion-plate description of the heroine. It is possible to satisfy the audience by a far more subtle process. When "Paula" in *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* walks on to the stage, before you have time to consider much as to her character you are made familiar with her nature in one single remark. You will remember how that when she comes into Aubrey Tanqueray's chambers at the Albany, after his bachelors' dinner is over and his guests have departed, he greets her and offers her some game pie. But she sees something else on the table which attracts her far more. "What beautiful fruit!" she exclaims. "I love fruit when it's expensive." Here is a perfect piece of observation and expression combined. Paula admits that she hasn't dined: yet, whereas a man in that condition would instantly chose the game pie, a woman, being more sensitive to colour and smell, would, without regard to what was best for her, be impelled by the



beauty of the fruit. Further still, when Paula so far unveils her nature as to remark that she loves fruit when it is expensive, you have at once a fairly shrewd idea as to her character : you know that she is reckless and extravagant. And her next remark fills up the details of her own portrait with the least expenditure of words. Why hasn't she dined, asks Aubrey. " In the first place," answers the woman, " I forgot to order my dinner, and my cook, who has always loathed me, thought he'd pay me out before he departed." She has forgotten to order her dinner: that shows how casual and unorderedly she is. You can almost picture in your mind the disarrangement of her drawing-room, the style of letter which she would write to her most intimate friends, the large scrawly handwriting and the impulsive manner in which she would sit down and indite it. She is loathed by her cook, as the chances are she is hated by persons other than those in her own household. But she continues as she eats the expensive fruit, "*I didn't care. As there was nothing to eat, I sat in my best frock, with my toes on the dining-room fender, and dreamt, oh, such a lovely dinner-party.*" She is vain, you see, nonchalant, an imaginative day-dreaming kind of creature.

I have put forward these instances as they afford an excellent example in the art of saying much in the briefest manner : and that will be an important point in your work of story-telling—in knowing what to present and what to omit. But of all those points which you include, the rule which should determine you is this : avoid that



which does not advance the plot of your story, and prune all that which does.

I have referred to the importance of interesting the reader from the first. With this end in view, it is not a bad plan to allow one of your characters to open the story with some exclamation or remark which will rivet the attention of the reader casually glancing at the printed page. Or, again, you may ring up your curtain on a sensational or otherwise attractive situation; but the danger very present in this case is of following such an opening with an anti-climax as already mentioned above. Adopt the example of the painter in his regard for composition of masses and contrasts. Unless your characters have distinctiveness your work will suffer and your readers will be confused. At the same time you will avoid harsh, crude contrasts. Black shows up conspicuously against a white background. A villain wrought in ebony and a heroine of pure ivory mutually show off each other's characteristics. But that is not art. The men and women of this world which you are going to depict, the kind which you and I know, are neither jet black nor ivory white, but a composition of the two colours. So, in your fiction, you will observe humanity too accurately, let us hope, to fall into such an error as this. For unless your story exhibits an approximate relation to actual life it loses its value in the hands of living people. Unless it unfolds such characters as are met with by people of character it has no interest. And, unless you understand life yourself, and can express

it, you had better leave imaginative literature alone.

For the purposes of fiction women are more interesting than men. Their emotional, capricious nature; their versatility, tact and intrigue; their vast capacities for love and hate, make them more suitable than men, whose temperaments are more stable, whose lives pursue a more direct channel. From the consideration as fiction writers women are by nature at least more endowed for the work of telling an interesting story. The insight into character is also much more theirs than men's. The love of detail, which is not a natural endowment always of a man, is distinctly feminine. But it is when we begin to look into the architecture of the story that we find the natural regard which a man has for orderliness displayed. In this respect alone the novel or short story written by a man excels that of a woman, and sometimes, too, in directness of attack and sureness of aim. For the same reason few plays written by women have ever been successful. If we wish for an object lesson we have only to compare the successful novels of John Oliver Hobbes with the failure of her plays.

It is as important for the fiction writer to know his audience as it is for the daily journalist. If you are writing for one of the popular journals, having the bulk of its readers in the suburbs and large manufacturing towns of the Midlands and north of England, you will know beforehand what kind of treatment will appeal to the temperament

of this class of readers. The kind of short story, for instance, that would be accepted in such a magazine as *The Smart Set* is not exactly likely to find an opening in *The Girls' Own Paper*. Not merely from press-cuttings but from life around you everywhere will you draw your plots and characters. To obtain verisimilitude you will introduce local colour, atmosphere in such a manner as to suit the characters and the nature of the plot. You are writing fiction and not fact : therefore, supposing only that your story convinces the reader, it matters little whether it is true or not. In actual practice both your background and your characters will not be true to any one model. Your scenery may be a long, open tract of marsh-land—in actual reality. In your story it may be convenient to surround it with high hills, to add a heavy curtain of mist, and to divide your foreground by a deep valley or river. Similarly your hero may be portraiture, but it will be like one of those composite photographs which contain the features of a dozen people superimposed. Perhaps in no one person of your acquaintance does there repose a complete category of the virtues and failings which your hero shall possess : you find his qualities only by a combination of those attributes shown in several people known to you.

Another point that requires to be emphasised is to make your characters consistent : consistent, that is, with the way in which you have drawn them. A peasant woman opening the door to the heroine who has tramped across the moor does not



make epigrams : nor will the hero do things which only an emotional woman would perform in extreme excitement. You can never convince even an editor by such faults, let alone the public, which expects only the best all the time ; and, after all, you are not so much creating as giving freedom to the created. The sculptor knows that in a block of marble there hides an angel, and he proceeds with hammer and chisel to let that angel out. The fiction writer sees in the men and women with whom he comes in contact stories of deep human interest, and he proceeds to set them forth on paper. If you have got the instinct of story-telling — some have, some have not the ability — much reading and more writing will in time enable you to tell your stories not verbally but in the magazines, the weeklies, on the more frivolous pages of some of the daily papers, and perhaps later in the cloth-bound novel.

As to the length which you should make your short story : that must depend entirely on the limitations imposed by the journal for which you propose writing. Different papers have different rules, but speaking roughly, a short story of about 1500 to 2000 words stands a better chance of acceptance than one of greater length. The writer should endeavour to use as much dialogue as possible, for readers prefer to let the characters describe themselves by word and action, rather than to be told in so many words.

In a volume dealing with journalism, it may seem at first to be out of place to pass on to discuss



novel writing. But nowadays in both the penny and halfpenny papers so much importance is attached to the novel running through its pages in serial form that it is pertinent to refer to the subject. Serial writing may not be a high form of literary work, but it is far from being unremunerative. I know of a comparatively large number of those who make considerable incomes from writing serial novels for boys and adults. If the story catches on, the circulation manager knows instantly, and the news will filter through to other departments. It is indeed remarkable the effect which a good exciting serial will have on a paper's prosperity. Sometimes when nothing else has availed to arrest the continual decrease in a paper's circulation, a good serial is the only factor for restoring prosperity. Fiction editors prefer to see a good part of the story before commissioning the whole, and there are certain peculiarities of treatment which differentiate certain papers from others. But primarily the story must have a plentiful supply of the "strong love interest with a happy ending" matter, and there must be a wealth of incident. The hero and heroine must be such as will instantly win the interest of many thousands of middle-class readers, chiefly women, and in the first instalment, which should consist of about 6000 words and end up with a dramatic "curtain," the facts of the case and both character and environment of the persons of the story must be sketched out in no uncertain manner. Put in another way, the serial story of the daily paper bears the same

relation in many respects to a good novel as the melodrama bears to a play as seen in a west-end theatre. The length to which the serial runs will vary according to circumstance. Some papers require about 60,000 words, some less, but, as a rule, even greater length. If the effect of the serial has swelled the circulation so much, the author may be requested to prolong the length and to refrain from hurling the villain over the precipitous cliff until a few more instalments.

Many young authors have frequently come to me for advice as to whether it would be advisable to place their work in the hands of a literary agent. The answer may be made here that it depends a good deal on the author. At the beginning of his career it is unlikely that the best agents will be any good to him, even if they should care to handle his work, which in all probability they will not. Some agents send in to editors no end of stories and other matter which have no possible chance of being used. Sometimes by an unknown author one discovers among these MSS a story that is acceptable, but although the editor expects the MSS sent in by an agent to be in some way select, this is not always so, and the unknown author might just as well have sent in his effort direct. But it is when the author has begun to make headway, and to acquire a market value, that the agent will be of service to him in obtaining better prices. Sometimes this bargaining has been pushed to such absurd extremes by the agent in his endeavour to make a big commission that it has done little more

for the author than earn unpopularity at the hands of the editor. In the event of a young author obtaining a vogue, the literary agent will, nevertheless, be of considerable help to him if not to the editor, for he will be able to obtain commissions and higher rates of remuneration than the author could have probably obtained by himself. Moreover, it leaves him free to devote his time to creative work, without the distractions of business arrangements and time wasted in calling on editors. If you have what seems to you an original idea for a short story, it is not a bad method of procedure to call on the editor, and in a few words tell him the plot. He may reply that the idea pleases him, but its acceptance would depend on the style in which it was told on paper. In that case you might find it worth while to write it out and chance its being suitable.

## CHAPTER X

### CRITICISM IN JOURNALISM

IN his excellent little volume on *Judgment in Literature*, which is strongly recommended to the reader as being packed with more sound information and saner reasoning than most books of such small dimensions, Mr. Basil Worsfold describes criticism as the exercise of judgment in the province of Art and Literature, and the critic consequently as the person who is possessed of the knowledge necessary to enable him to pronounce right judgments upon the merits of such works as come within this province. Mr. A. B. Walkley, again, the brilliant dramatic critic of the *Times*, in lecturing before the Royal Institution some years ago, summed up criticism as the means whereby art becomes conscious of its existence. But far more human, more personal is the memorable definition which criticism receives in the words of M. Anatole France, who defines it as "the adventures of the soul among masterpieces." The critic is not to be some impersonal judging power sitting impassive above the matter criticised, "for," continues the same author, "in order to be frank, the critic ought to say: Gentlemen, I am about to speak of



myself à propos of Shakespeare, or Racine, or Pascal, or Goethe—by no means a bad opportunity.”

It is this last function of criticism which has usurped much of the older method of critical journalism. Impressionism is as surely beginning to dominate criticism as it is any other part of journalism. It is no longer the case everywhere for a critic to hide himself in the impersonality of his journal. Very many criticisms of books, art and the drama, in all kinds of papers, daily as well as weekly and monthly, are now signed articles or at least bearing the initials of the reviewer. From the point of view of the person who has to bear the brunt of the criticism this is as it should be, for it enables the creator to see if the critic selected is one of such a standing and knowledge as to justify trust which has been handed over to him, posing as a specialist. But it must not be thought that it is from the motive of fairness to the author that the critic reveals his identity. It is simply in obedience to a fashion which at present is extending itself over journalism. As a revolt against the editorial “we” there is a tendency now to run madly into the opposite extreme, and for those who have more assurance than knowledge to impress their own inaccurate or half-formed opinions on to a public that loves to be instructed even if by an incapable teacher. This seeking after the personal note in journalism is but another manifestation of the more human ideals which prevail at the present time in channels of activity other than journalism. The

popularity of the personal method of reviewing as undertaken by Mr. W. T. Stead in the *Review of Reviews*, or by Mr. T. P. O'Connor in his own weekly, has also encouraged the same system to be followed in other papers. The reader feels himself on more intimate terms when the reviews are thus written. He cares less for a formal, logical review of the merits of the work under discussion than for an interesting article containing the author's conversation about himself à propos of the book which heads the article. The critic's own anecdotes and experiences are mentioned side by side with those of the author of the book: interesting passages are quoted at length not so much for the purposes of criticism as in order to interest the reader. Although such a method ensures the intelligent interest of the reader of the review it cannot be regarded always as a competent criticism: too often it is merely an appreciation or a motley collection of opinions produced by scissors and paste and a few scattered ideas to join up the paragraphs. In order to perform the task properly the reviewer should be a man of wide reading and accurate information obtained at first hand. He must have the news-sense of the journalist—understanding what the reader will appreciate and how much—and he must be endowed with the faculty of the sound critic who is able to discriminate. In many ways this personal element has its drawbacks: too often it is the means of exhibiting the reviewer's personal vanity than of giving the reader an adequate estimate of the book.

The remuneration to be obtained from book-reviewing is not great, but in an earlier chapter I mentioned the fact that it afforded an opportunity for the young journalist to make an entrance into the profession. Unless he has special knowledge and is something of an expert in some particular sphere he must expect only to have novels and books of only average attainment for review. If the aspirant is a woman and has kept herself abreast of the output of fiction she is likely to make an excellent reviewer of the latest novels. She, quite as much as a man, has the instinct for a story, and if the characters have been drawn badly, or the ending of the novel has been unsatisfactory, she will be able to notice this at once. As a critic of style and construction her opinions may not be the equivalent of men of greater literary ability and experience : but her value consists in this—that she very probably reflects accurately the taste of the readers of the paper containing the review, and that the opinion she has come to after reading the novel will also be that of other women among whom the journal finds its public.

In reviewing any book the reviewer, indeed, is compelled of necessity to have in mind the person who in turn will read his review. Critics have been accused of being merely consumers instead of creators of literature. This is not true, however, for if they become consumers of one art they produce another. Even in his critical statements the critic has to be an artist. He is not merely assessing the value of a newly created work : he is doing this so



well, in such excellence of literary style, with such complete knowledge of the subject under review, with so much exchange of ideas in return for the information given out by the author of the book, that if he is not erecting a new building, at least he is adding to what the author has himself built : he is polishing the corners of the Temple which the author has left bare even though well constructed. He is, in fact, putting on the gilt to the pinnacle which crowns the conclusion of the work. After all, what is literature ? Is it not in its widest sense the record of impressions of realities made upon the mind and afterwards expressed by the mind in its own way ? If the author is entitled to publish the results of those impressions, then why not the reviewer ? Literature is the permanent record, or at least one of the least perishable records, of human activity and effort. It is at once a message from the past to the present, containing the warnings and other consequences which spring from certain lines of procedure, and a collection of valuable data for the ensuing generation to profit by in their continuation of progress. But it is in the manner of recording these impressions of the mind that a large part of the critic's work is taken up in considering. As there are rules and limitations for all activities, so there are for the painter and the writer. The setting forth of plot and character, the symmetry of the literary production, these will be tested by the reviewer from the standard of the accepted canons of the art under consideration.

In a popular handbook there is no room or oppor-



tunity for going very deeply below the surface of the art of criticism : that demands treatment in a separate volume. But for the benefit of the journalist we may remind him that modern criticism is to be traced back to the amount of attention followed by meditation and discussion which were aroused by the impetus given to creative literature consequent on the Renaissance. Further back than the Renaissance criticism finds its basis in Aristotle and Plato. The deep allegiance to classical and Renaissance models which in French literature, especially dramatic, was such a marked characteristic, has never been so emphasised in our own country. Rather has the tendency been to defy rules and to proceed along independent and freer lines. Not merely shall the critic concern himself with the question—"Does this work obey the historic rules which have always been accepted as limitations?"", but a more human aspect is nowadays taken into account before he gives his opinion as to the merits, by interrogating himself as to whether the work appeals to his imagination and emotions. The revolt from conventions is nowhere more manifest than in the history of painting. Laying aside certain movements that have been brought into life in England, on the Continent and in America, which for their origin have only such base motives as pride and jealousy, it is impossible to shut one's eyes to the healthy condition which art has shown itself to be possessed of, by repeatedly throwing off the insincere conventions in which a previous generation has

entangled it. Take for instance the pre-Raphaelite Movement. Whatever excesses and extravagances some of its least discerning disciples may have been guilty of, its effect is still felt to-day as exceedingly healthy. It was an attempt to get away from falsehood, to desert empty conventions which had no life. Look at those galleries of pictures by their predecessors wherein under all circumstances grass was painted brown instead of green. This and many other examples of a vain, unreasoning following after false models was swept away by those responsible for the new ideals in art. It was a fight for the right of the individual artist to interpret Nature as she appeals to his own mind : in other words, it was a contest for individualism. In modern creative literature and art, generally, this democratic spirit is a notable distinguishing feature : and modern criticism has followed in its wake. The resultant effect is that persons and phenomena are presented not so much as apart and independent, but as they appear to the mind of the creator of the art in which these are considered. To take another instance, this time in the domain of drama, even if the pessimists are right in bewailing over the lack of originality exhibited in our plays, at least we are proceeding towards the right ideal. Those set-speeches, those artificial, long soliloquies of the old-fashioned plays are never allowed for a moment nowadays. Oratory, in itself an artificiality, has given way to dialogue, which, if it is not actual life, is very near it. Declamation survives chiefly in melodrama, which is the least natural

of all classes of our plays. And even in melodrama brisk action and short, concise conversation are replacing the rhetorical displays which were wont to exist. In a word, then, the standpoint from which the critic will judge of a work is this: has the artist—painter, playwright or author—interpreted his theme as he himself conceived it in his own imagination, or has he been a slavish adherent to rules and conventions? Again the critic will look out for the danger of the opposite extreme: he will be on the alert for scenting crude realism which is not art. The imagination is so delicately constructed an endowment that it is not contented with mere matter: it demands something higher and nobler, because, in the words of Addison, "the Mind of Man requires something more perfect in Matter than what it finds there, and can never meet with any Sight in Nature which sufficiently answers its highest ideas of Pleasantness: or, in other words, because the Imagination can fancy to itself Things more Great, Strange, or Beautiful than the eye ever saw and is still sensible of some defect in what it has seen." Thus, it is not sufficient that the artist observes Nature accurately but that he should idealise. The novelist and dramatist do not photograph the world and its people. They are not photographers but painters. Actual human lives do not follow in the swiftly moving, highly condensed plots as you see them on the stage or read them in a book. Nor do men and women actually speak in real life as one hears them in the theatre. In everyday conversation



there are inaccuracies of grammar, there is not that balance and symmetry which the dramatist or novelist has to effect. But each character and each incident are taken separately from actual life and pieced together again so deftly that the whole thing appears to the audience as if it *might* have happened. So, too, with the painter of a landscape. He does not slavishly copy the scene before him : the camera would do that better than he. But he seeks to bring about an ideal because his imagination yearns for something higher than what his sight bluntly reflects. And so he disposes his foreground, his middle distance, his background so that his picture shall answer " the highest ideas of Pleasantness." He introduces a few figures, a flock of sheep which did not exist in the vision which his eyes without imagination revealed to him. He exaggerates the shadow in the deep valley so as to emphasise the light on the horizon. He is ever, in fact, drawing on what he *has* seen to idealise what he sees : for "we cannot indeed have a single Image in the Fancy," says Addison, "that did not make its first Entrance through the Sight."

When the dramatic critic is sent by his paper to attend a first-night of a play he must, as Ruskin long since insisted, be possessed of the capacity for enthusiasm. He is not going to the theatre in the spirit of the judge about to try an alleged criminal : on the contrary he is going with a mind and imagination prepared to be impressed. When he comes out and hurries off to write his article for the next day's issue, he will set forth a record of his own



impressions, and as such it should be a literary essay entirely different from the "account" which a reporter would give of the play. The reader wants to know what the play is about, and in the small space allotted to you and within the short time at your disposal it is your duty to give him a condensed but running narrative. At the same time you will be cognisant of the rules which govern dramatic art. The office of all art is to give pleasure by appealing to the senses. If the play has caused you displeasure you will record the fact together with your reasons. You are there not merely so that afterwards you will be able to describe the plot and the setting, but to notice the technique and to comment on the skill of dramatist and actor alike. Thus, the newspaper reader wants to know not merely the story of the play you sat through in your comfortable stall last night, but how well or how badly the story was told out. If the plot and its mode of presentation have been successful, then he must be able to point out to the reader just why they succeeded. And as the dramatist has had to select certain incidents from life for the making of his play, so the critic has to choose from the incidents presented by the playwright those by which the public that reads newspapers may formulate its own opinions.

Journalistic criticism, whether applied to literature, art or the drama, necessitates, firstly, the personal capacity in respect of disposition of temperament, the capability to receive impressions. Secondly, it demands a knowledge of the rules

which govern the play, the painting or the literary production. Thirdly, it demands an ability to express itself in literary form so as to be in itself a creation and not a reproduction. There is no branch of education which as yet provides lectures in playwriting. Such a knowledge can be obtained only by a close attention to the rules of the art both in the study and in the theatre : it can come under no condition except that of long experience. But there are schools of acting, and schools, too, where music and painting and sculpture may be learned. And, however brilliant the journalist may be, however young and therefore self-confident, it is fair neither to the reader nor the author of the work under criticism to send a man who has not, besides his ability to write, some special knowledge that will enable him to be impressed in the right manner and according to the canons of the art he is sent to criticise.

## CHAPTER XI

### JOURNALISM FOR WOMEN

IN some respects women are peculiarly fitted for the work of journalism. That persistence and inquisitiveness which are characteristics of their sex find a suitable scope when employed in the duties of news-gathering. Nowadays the woman journalist plays a part that is far from inconspicuous in this world of printing and writing. She has her journalistic clubs and mutual protection society : she has her syllabus of lectures on matters connected with her profession, and she has her own special departments in the newspaper and magazine world in which she can run no risk of any competition of men journalists.

It is not merely in recording society functions, weddings and the like that she is now employed, although for this she is especially suitable. A good memory for faces and a knowledge of " Who's Who " must however first be reckoned as essentials for this kind of work. Like the men who earn their bread by this profession she must also be able to write what she sees in a suitable way. As a rule the literary style of most women journalists is far from perfect. Those who have had to waste valu-

able time pruning their MSS will be agreed. It is indeed a curious and unoriginal manner of writing which many would-be literary ladies affect. A mixture of truisms, base journalese conventionalities, a pseudo-dignified style, which is befitting rather the school-board instructress than one who is writing for educated members of her own sex, highly dogmatic and interspersed with unnecessary French phrases of which one might mention such expressions as "*pied à terre*," "*parti*," "*par excellence*" and many others which only serve to irritate an editor and wear out his blue pencil more rapidly than need be. I know of at least half a dozen London editors who bear me out in this criticism of the work of women journalists. She is too often the victim of her own emotions, and the amount of jealousy which she will exhibit is not creditable to her sex. I find the same editorial agreement that women journalists are exceedingly deficient in honourable instincts when writing for money. This is a serious indictment, but it is none the less true. With them persistency is carried out regardless of methods. The article comes in several hundred words shorter than was contracted for, or she fails to deliver the work to time and in the manner arranged. She endeavours to foist on you an article which you had never commissioned. She will come in with a ridiculous idea on your busiest day and waste your valuable time with an impracticable suggestion.

But that is only one side of her and the worst. As a writer of fiction she is at her best, and even the



failings above enumerated belong not to all but to some, and to the latter not always but part of the time. In her short stories, her clever little character sketches, her poems, her fairy tales for children, she is indeed delightful and well worthy of her hire. There is a delicacy of touch which is inimitable. Her serials, too, if they err from weak construction are at least intensely human and emotional: and that is precisely what a serial should be. If the beginner wishes to succeed as a free-lance journalist rather than as a fiction writer her path to attainment is pretty much that of the man. If she has any special knowledge such as eugenics, domestic economy, art, music she will undoubtedly soon find an opening for her first attempt in journalism, and indeed it is most desirable that she should specialise from the first. If she has a really first-class knowledge of fashions she may, when the opportunity presents itself, be given a page in every issue in which to deal with a matter that is so foreign to a man's nature. If she can convince the editor of a paper that has not possessed this feature of a woman's page that such an innovation is desirable and that she is the very person to undertake that work, so much the better. But it is important that she should be the authority that she professes to be on matters feminine. For it is within the experience of most editors that almost every woman journalist believes herself to be predestined to become a fashion-editress. He gives way either out of the compassion of his heart (which in fidelity to his paper he should never have done) or through the exaggerated

estimate of the abilities of an ambitious woman. It is indeed a serious matter that a paper with a reputation for accuracy should err even in one of its departments, and no editor nowadays, unless an inexperienced one, is likely to allow a woman journalist to use his paper as a practising ground. But of the few experts who are recognised as such on fashions for women there are some two or three who make an income that runs into four figures every year. They have made a lifelong study of the subject : they are kept daily in touch with what is going to be : they pay regular visits to Paris and Vienna, and—what is exceedingly valuable from the commercial point of view—their connection with Bond Street, Regent Street and elsewhere is such that they are able to influence a large amount of advertisements.

For the woman journalist possessing less marked talent there is yet a large scope, for so many papers now give a special department to women's interests that copy has to be gathered regularly, and that necessitates women news-gatherers. You have only to examine the journals on the bookstalls to obtain proof of this statement. Woman, of every age and of every social status, is catered for by modern journals. The matron and maid, the wife and mother, the young schoolgirl, the sentimental serving maid—each and every class has its own magazine or journal of some sort, and in some of these there should be found undoubtedly a chance for the beginner. Much of the matter that is published is frankly the weakest and sickliest form of journalism,

but as long as there is a demand there will come the supply. One woman journalist can provide at a remuneration of a guinea per thousand words abundant information on matters concerning babies and their welfare: another will find her scope in articles on the toilet with simple hints and larger illustrations—the kind of article that an American editor once described to me as belonging to the “How-to-become-beautiful-in-fifteen-minutes” series. But vanity was ever a weakness of the feminine nature, and few appeals to it are made unsuccessfully. Articles on housekeeping with economy, papers on how to become popular, paragraphs on men and women who are being talked about, advice on courtship, etiquette, marriage, careers for women, dressmaking, millinery, and the like all have to be found, and though the same thing has been said a thousand times before, it has to be said yet again for a younger generation.

Then again, the woman journalist with a good knowledge of dress may have the pleasant task of attending the dress rehearsals of a new west-end play in order to write from quarter to half a column of a chatty description of the costumes worn by the actresses. With her may also go a fashion artist. She is not debarred, either, from contributing to magazines of general and not exclusively feminine interest. Valuable work has been done by women writers in this way. If the subject interests her she may continue in her investigations past a point at which a man would have become wearied. But her patience will not be likely to pass unrewarded. A



reputation for zealous news-gathering and reliability as a journalist are such as bring future commissions and those well worth accepting. She has a more delicate artistic sense than a man in most cases, and may safely be trusted to make choice of pictures and photographs.

Many women journalists make excellent interviewers where a man might fail. It is not rare for an editor to depute a lady to interview a celebrity on a topical crisis instead of a man, for the reason that it is less easy to decline a tactful woman. If she can go about her work courteously and in her own clever manner get at facts she will have shown that she is a valuable help to her paper. But I know that the question is already on the reader's lips, "Supposing that one does not begin by sending stray articles to an editor, what other chance is there of getting a footing?" The answer may be given thus: write a short note to the editor of such a paper as you think would be likely to publish the article you have in mind, submitting the idea with a very slight outline of the manner of treating it, and ask for an interview. If he commissions it there is your chance. If, not having seen your work, you write it subject to his approval, at least you may have a chance, and in any case you have made a serious effort. But if you have specialised in any one subject you are bound sooner or later to find in one or two of the many journals issued every week and month the opportunity you so much desire. In the meantime you might be able to give some help in writing some of the voluminous matter that



goes to fill the big Christmas numbers, for which you should make your plans as soon as ever you return from your summer holiday at the latest. Then there are the big special numbers of the ladies' papers which appear in September and February dealing primarily with the autumn and spring fashions. Having once been of some service it may be that other articles will be invited from the same paper. Or again, when the season is at its highest and all sorts of weddings and bazaars and dress rehearsals and garden-parties are taking place, perhaps, when the staff of the paper is not adequate for all these there is sometimes a fitting occasion for a woman journalist to offer her services to the likely paper.

And yet, having said so much, notwithstanding that some of the highest posts in London journalism and elsewhere are filled by women and filled remarkably well, yet it would be unfair to urge a woman to enter so uncertain, so strenuous a calling. In olden days a girl was not thought accomplished unless she could "play a bit," or "paint a bit." Now she has a greater bias towards journalism and literature. The improved methods of girls' education, the coming of the independence of woman and her cry of the right to work have sent her to London in crowds, thinking that in journalism a pleasant, honourable sphere of activity would be found in which a woman of refinement and education would meet many of the most interesting celebrities of the day. But let there be no mistake. Journalism is not that easy, comfortable profession : it is serious, hard work, and fuller of disappoint-

ments than many professions. It is pitiable to note the long line of such educated women as we are speaking of calling at one's office day after day, some of them quite unsuitable for journalism, with not a serviceable idea in their head suitable for an article, with no definite plan of campaign—only a vague idea that some day success will be found coming towards them with open arms. Unless a woman has singular gifts for news-gathering and news-writing she will be best advised to remain as a hospital nurse, a governess, companion or what she wills. The ways that lead to success in journalism are long and steep and narrow, and even when you imagine you are nearing the top the path may suddenly end with a precipice. But having said even this, I know that the woman who has set her mind on being engaged in London as a writer of some sort will disregard warnings : in which case she will for herself find out most of the experiences already enumerated.

There is just one other opportunity, which we might mention before dismissing the subject, wherein a woman of sound health and an education above the average might find herself placed. I refer to the post of librarian and "undertaker" in the office of a big London daily newspaper. In the strictest sense this is rather librarianship than journalism, but the insight into the daily life of a big paper would be so valuable that it might be put to further use at a later date. For such detailed work as cutting out matter from current journals and pigeon-holing the cuttings, a woman is as good as a

man and perhaps better. But in the hurry and scurry of getting the paper to press, when facts have to be looked up and verified with not a second to lose, when the hours are such that she could not leave the office until 2 a.m., and then have to cross London in perhaps a rain- or snowstorm, it is doubtful whether any one but an exceptional woman would endure such experience night after night for long.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE ARTIST-JOURNALIST

ONE of the most striking developments in modern journalism is that of relieving the monotony of columns of type with illustrations not merely from wash-drawings and line sketches but photographs. Consequently a new department in journalism has been opened out, and there has sprung up a special kind of journalist, who is concerned not so much with gathering actual news, like the reporter or special correspondent, as in making accurate sketches, or taking instantaneous photographs of the events which will interest the general reader. If a comparison be made of the appearance of the *Daily Telegraph*, and also of the *Daily Mail*, as issued to-day and of a year or two ago, it will at once be seen that illustrations play a highly important part in the telling of the days' news. Yesterday's latest aeroplane accident, the arrival in England of a foreign sovereign, the motor-bus accident in the Strand, the great criminal trial at the Old Bailey, the big railway smash in Scotland—you find it all there in picture as well as in prose. Only a few years ago the public were content to read of these in their morning or evening papers, and to depict



them in their own imaginations until the big illustrated weeklies came out a few days later with either highly imaginative pictures of the incident drawn by artists, who had moved no nearer to the scene of the event than Fleet Street, or with photographs taken by some local and enterprising tradesman. But to-day the artist-journalist has his own part to play, whether as draughtsman or snapshotter ; and since the popularity of the illustrated morning paper has become so great, the demand for this special type of journalist is likely to be greater as time goes on.

It should not be difficult to become an efficient photographer-journalist. A certain amount of artistic sense and feeling for composition are requisite, but these are entirely subsidiary to the great essentials which already we have discussed as belonging to the ideal news-gatherer. The nose for news must be helped by the eye for a news-picture. He must realise just what kind of a picture will please his editor and his readers, besides knowing, like the ordinary news-getter, what matter will be read with interest. If he learns that a large meeting is to be held in Trafalgar Square to protest forcibly against some action of the Government, it may or may not be worth his while to attend ; but if he finds that Mr. Bernard Shaw is to address the throng, it may be advisable to wait until the author of *Press-Cuttings* stands up to speak, and raises his arms against the conveniently dark background of Nelson's monument. Then proceeding down the Strand he may be in time to catch the parties of a

*cause célèbre* emerging from the Law Courts. Before they have stepped into their taxi-cabs, their portraits have been secured for the interest of an ever-curious public never satiated with too much news, illustrated or otherwise. I submit that the practice of taking pictures in court of prisoners, witnesses, plaintiffs and defendants, and even of the judges themselves, whether by photography or sketching, is one that is both highly objectionable and in direct opposition to the high standard which British journalism has maintained. The blame rests, however, not so much with the journalist—whether in court or the editorial office—as with the proprietors who allow and encourage the practice: but still more is it a reflection on the taste of the general public, to whom belongs the final right of choosing the tune which their paid piper shall play. In the case of a prisoner who is found not guilty, it is a sufficient ordeal that his name should appear throughout the whole press as a potential criminal: but that his very portrait, taken at a time when his position is felt most acutely, should appear side by side with the police narrative, is an action calculated to cause unnecessary suffering to a man who has already suffered too much.

The opening for the pen-and-ink artist on the daily paper consists chiefly in making the daily cartoon and caricature. He will attend the office of the paper and take his instructions from the editor as to the subject of the day. In times of great political agitation this may not be difficult to suggest. But in August, when the circulation

is down to its lowest mark and there is little happening except by the sea, it is not so easy to infuse into the journal some new life. There are times when both editor and artist find their brains barren of ideas, but all the time the readers expect to be amused and interested. The caricature and cartoon, whether political or non-political, consists really in exaggerating one or more essential characteristics but within such limits as will exclude foolishness. As to the manner of carrying this out, that depends for its merit on the style and skill of the artist. It is but an example of the old principle that art is not art unless it is the outcome of the person's own mind. Perhaps nowhere is an artist allowed more freedom for eccentricity of style than in this class of work. The more characteristic his art is so much the more is it appraised. He is not asked, for instance, for a faithful portrait of the Leader of the Opposition : a Baker Street photographer could produce that far better. But an artist by his own cleverness and observation may see points which are suggestive of humour though the photograph barely indicated them. It is in comparing such different work as that of Mr. E. T. Reed as seen in *Punch* and of Sir F.C. Gould as given in the *Westminster Gazette* that the personality of the artist and his point of view become clearly manifest.

In many respects the cartoonist will find that the American artists who draw for the big sheets issued from the offices of the New York "dailies" can teach him valuable information. Like their own national humour, the American cartoon succeeds



because of the clever way in which exaggeration is handled. Paradoxical as it may sound, one may assert that the American joke, whether in type or picture, "gets there" just because it is restrained exaggeration. And the English journalist who draws for the daily papers will find that in this subtle emphasis of salient features lies the whole art of caricaturing and cartooning.

But at present it is chiefly from the weeklies and monthlies that the artist-journalist must expect to receive most of his income. Here is an opportunity not merely for line-drawings but for wash and even colour work. And let it be said that it is easier for an artist, hitherto unknown, to secure an entry into a magazine than for an unknown writer, for the reason that an artist's work is self-evident. An editor can tell at a glance whether the man has ability, whether the style is suitable for his magazine. The artist-journalist has thus far more chances of being successful from the first than the author-journalist. If he is wise he will send along a specimen drawing to the editor by post, mentioning that he will call on the editor three days later. If the editor is struck by the work he will probably offer the artist a short story to illustrate, or he might suggest a subject for a whole page illustration. But it is not advisable to call on the editor without an appointment and without having previously submitted a drawing. It is much better to give the editor a chance of looking at the work quietly, when the stream of callers has ended.



After a time, when the artist has succeeded in a few short-story illustrations, he may get the chance of illustrating a serial. This may mean any number up to about fifty drawings, and since the full page drawings will be paid at an average rate of three guineas each, and the half page at one and a half to two guineas, the commission is one that cannot be despised. Some editors select the incidents to be sketched : others leave it to the discretion of the artist. It would be better if this were always possible, for it gives an artist a chance of doing his best in a scene in which he delights. But in practice, unfortunately, an editor finds that human nature in the artist differs not much from that of other mortals, and the way necessitating the least resistance is chosen with disappointing results. Thus, for example, in order to save himself the trouble and work of composing and carrying out a fine picture with no end of contrast and a crowd of figures and perhaps some interesting detail in the foreground, your artist-journalist brings you in a wretched two-figure subject where he has depicted the hero and heroine in a conventional scene that has required no research and very little thinking. Some novelists give the appearance of their characters only gradually : not until the end of the story, indeed, are the men and women more than lightly sketched in. Others let you know at once just how the characters appeared, whether they were tall or short, dark or fair. It is then highly advisable that the artist should insist on having from the first not merely an instalment but proofs of the whole story, or it

is impossible for justice to be done to the people that lived in the author's mind.

An artist who succeeds in getting a fairly regular supply of commissions from three or four of the monthlies should be able to make a comfortable little income. But besides the monthlies he has always a good chance of appearing in the big weeklies, such as *The Sketch*, *Illustrated London News*, *The Graphic*, and similar journals. The payment is usually about £12 for a single full-page and £15 to £20 for a whole double page. If he has a good and original joke he will find, if he gives it a suitable setting in an attractive drawing, a market ready for his wares. It is only fair to add that while this class of work seems to show no signs of diminishing in demand, yet the tendency now is not to illustrate short stories, and even serials as well. The advent of the all-story magazine, printed on cheap paper, with pictures only on the cover, has taken away from the artist a certain amount of work: for even the general magazines are inclined to print their fiction on cheaper paper and without illustrations to accompany them.

About July or August the artist should be getting in hand any ideas he may have for covers for Christmas numbers. Unless he has very bad luck, or his art is worse, the artist-journalist should succeed in obtaining a few guineas by this means. Anything original, yet not going too far away from the conventional pretty-head-plus-mistletoe style of cover, is welcomed by editors who desire that from the cosmopolitan medley of Christmas

double numbers their magazine shall stand out distinctive and attractive. There is a good deal for the artist to learn in the relation which three-colour reproduction bears to the actual painting, and these essential points he can only learn by experience. But besides the covers specially designed for Christmas, many magazines have a different cover for each month, and an artist who has been doing good work may, with confidence, submit a rough sketch to his editor, and ask that in the event of its seeming likely to suit the magazine that a definite commission be given to complete the sketch. In payment for such a design the artist may receive a varying fee from three guineas and upwards. Some periodicals are willing to return the drawing after publication, but others in no case allow the artist to receive back his original.

As in writing, so in drawing, it is an excellent thing to specialise in one particular subject. Thus, for instance, an editor is glad to have in his address-book the name of a man who is an expert in drawing ships and naval subjects, whom he can send down with confidence to a naval review. Another artist may have a reputation for drawing smart women : he will be the ideal man to send to the first night of the opening of the Opera. With the full extent of a double page and two or three days in which to complete his drawing ready for the block-makers, he has an opportunity of showing what he is capable of. Sometimes, too, he may be sent to a new play, when he will find that sketching rapidly in a

dimly lighted theatre is fraught with some difficulty.

Nowadays the standard of reproduction and of matter reproduced is so high that there is not a living for an inferior man to find in illustration work. Even if he find his work acceptable to the smaller and therefore less remunerative journals, the number of commissions he will receive are so small that the artist will not find it worth while. In America the art of black-and-white illustration and reproduction has reached a point higher than in England, and since the prices paid are equally greater, it is no uncommon thing for an English artist, having achieved success here, to cross the Atlantic for a number of years.



## CHAPTER XIII

### COMMERCIAL JOURNALISM

EVEN the least observant of readers must have noticed the change which within the last few years has come over the advertisement columns of the English press. They are indeed scarcely less interesting than those which are given up exclusively to literary matter. The improvement emanated from America, whose magazines contain some of the most attractive advertisement matter in the world. Thence it spread to English magazines, and subsequently to our daily papers after much conservative opposition. Big commercial firms began to realise that press-advertising was not merely an American habit but a highly necessary and profitable method of reaching the consumer. Those who had advertised on a large scale, and judiciously, found the return to be so enormous that rival firms rapidly followed the example. Newspaper proprietors, unable to hold out any longer against the large revenue to be obtained from displayed advertisements, broke away from their traditions and admitted also illustrations to accentuate the advertisements.

Thus a new and special opening for the journalist

was made, and to-day, besides the managing editor and the various other editors of departments—literary, financial, magazine-page, and so on, we find men who designate themselves advertisement-editors. The *Daily Mail* five years ago opened a special department of its own for the writing and designing of advertisements with no charge to the advertiser except out-of-pocket expenses such as block-making. Commercial journalism needs a special ability which belongs exclusively neither to the business man nor to the ordinary journalist. It demands the instincts of both, and the finest copy-writer is the man who, after having gone through the full training as a journalist, applies his mind to the study of press advertising and business publicity. There are in London and the provinces to-day high-salaried men who have distinguished themselves as journalists on well-known papers, and have left their papers in order to manage the advertising section of a big firm of manufacturers. Booklets, "folders," and even regular magazines are published by some purely commercial firms in order to keep well ahead in the race for publicity. Now to edit and in part write all these it is essential that a journalist of competent ability should be employed. Advertising campaigns involving an annual expenditure of £10,000 or £20,000 have to be planned, of which a considerable part will be devoted to advertising in the daily, weekly and monthly press. In all these the journalistic instinct has to go hand in hand with business knowledge and the kind of public to which an appeal

is being made. The wonderful strides which have been made in the art of printing and reproduction have rendered it possible to issue really beautiful pictorial designs in order further to attract the eye of the purchaser ; and more than one artist is making an income running into four figures for drawing and painting exclusively for commerce.

The danger that awaits the beginner in commercial journalism is that of being too long and profuse. The whole success of copy-writing lies in expressing your argument in the fewest and at the same time the most telling words. I use the word "telling" not inappropriately, for the advertisement matter must not merely be striking but highly informative. It must seek to convince in the most economical language, whereas it will have often been the journalist's experience that he had to spin out his facts over several hundreds or thousands of words. "Padding" finds no place in advertising: rather the difficulty is in the opposite direction. At the same time there is no reason why the man who has the nose for news should not rapidly find that he has also the instinct for presenting advertising facts in such a manner as to make them appeal with considerable power. There are obviously special rules to be studied and observed, but the most important feature to be regarded and always to be had in mind by the writer of advertising copy is the psychological effect it will have on the reader who buys the paper not in order to read the advertisements but the news. He who aspires to see the matter put forth scienti-

fically and with great skill and clearness is advised to study *The Theory of Advertising*, by Professor Walter Dill Scott, which is an inquiry into the principles of psychology in their relation to successful advertising.

Confining our attention to that part of publicity which is denoted in press advertising let us consider now the duties of the commercial journalist, or, as he is commonly called, the "advertisement-writer." We will assume that he is in charge of the copy department of a prosperous manufacturing firm, whose products are capable of being advertised. For not all goods are affected by this factor. A firm which manufactures armour plates for battle-ships, for instance, has practically nothing to gain from advertising in the press. Its publicity methods will be far more subtle and of less obvious a nature. But granted that the commodity is one likely to be in universal use, it is undeniable that, provided only that the article is what it professes to be and the price is right, the more it is advertised so much the more it will sell. This statement is at once so obvious and has so often proved in actual experience its truth, that it is surprising that the science of advertising has been so long neglected.

The proprietors or their agents will have purchased space in certain selected journals for a certain number of issues. The price paid is nowadays so enormous that it must be used to its fullest value. The copy-writer's task is to utilise that space in the best and most economical manner. How is he going to do it? First let him not forget what



has to be learnt in every art, that contrast is of the highest value. Therefore, valuable as type may be and is, yet white space devoid of type and illustration must be reckoned at an equally high rate. In a row of empty houses the one which is unoccupied advertises itself by reason of the contrast which it bears to the others. So in a column of advertisements where type is used plentifully yours will stand out in marked distinction if it is given a liberal amount of unoccupied white space around it.

But whatever matter you decide to put in that space see to it that it is to the point all the time. There must be nothing ambiguous, nothing slipshod or casual in your advertisement copy. Like the dramatist, the copy-writer must weigh every single word and sentence. Furthermore he must dispose them in such a way as to have a cumulative effect. He must tell his story and then end. It may not be that immediately on reading the advertisement the consumer will purchase the article advertised : it is possible that he is not yet in need of such a commodity. But the effect of the advertisement must be such that when the consumer next desires an article of that class he will buy that one that is already familiar to him through having seen it advertised.

With the given space to be occupied before him, the advertisement-writer will determine whether a sketch or ornamental border of any sort shall be used : if so he will instruct the artist accordingly. Then, having at hand the virtues of the commodity

to be advertised, he will arrange his points, and decide which shall be used. And here let it be said that it is impossible for the casual reader to grasp more than one point of an advertisement at a time. If an article makes its appeal because it has three distinct virtues—highly efficient, economical in use and cheap in price, it is far better to devote three advertisements spread over three issues to saying so. In time the effect will be seen in the sales of the commodity. But it is no longer any good merely to affirm that such-and-such an article is the best: there must be the reason-why argument as well. In the fewest words the peculiar appropriateness of this particular article over others of its class will be clearly pointed out. Similarly if the firm is the manufacturer of several commodities let them have separate advertisements, for otherwise the appeal loses in directness and the mind of the public is liable to become confused. At the same time care should be taken to avoid over-statement. Exaggeration may succeed in selling more of the article for a time, but presently the sales will cease mounting, and through disappointment and disgust the consumer will avoid the article. There must be something, too, quite distinctive about your series of advertisements, so that as soon as they are noticed the reader knows without reading further to what article the announcement belongs. If you can introduce humour, all the better, for humour is a comparatively rare quality in the world and is always popular. Nevertheless flippancy and forced wit are calculated to do more

harm than good. In engineering an advertising campaign the first objective is to make the article and its trade-name well-known: the second is to show what it will do, and the last is to prove its worth. And for this third the custom of printing extracts from testimonials received is sound, for its power to bring increased sales is enormous. Let it not be forgotten, also, that you are appealing to potential buyers through their eyes and brain: and that you must fire their imagination, so that the image conjured up in the brain of the reader is just what you had in mind. Through his imagination you get at his senses. If it is a food you are advertising you let him imagine how pleasant it is to the palate, how nutritious to his body and so on. There must be nothing either in the wording or the design of the advertisement to suggest bad taste, nor anything to cause pain or unpleasantness, but the reverse. Even the American advertisement of an Insurance Office with a design at the top showing an unprovided widow weeping was considered by experts to be unlikely to bring business because it suggested something unpleasant. Far better would it have been to have run the argument for insurance on the basis of showing how the fact of the deceased being insured softened the grief of those left behind.

Having selected his line of argument and written it out in its most condensed form, the commercial journalist will cast about for a suitable catch-heading. The importance of this needs little demonstrating, for amid a mass of advertisements,



each endeavouring to win the applause of the reader, that one which shouts loudest and most clearly will be the first to attract attention. And having obtained attention the advertisement is then able to proceed with its announcement.

We pass then to speak of the way in which the matter of the advertisement will be made-up for the compositor. For this purpose the advertisement-writer will make a "dummy" to fill the space allotted. Then he will decide which of the lines shall be displayed in prominent type. This will include the catch-heading, the name of the article and of the firm with its address. These can be written boldly on to the dummy so as to get some idea as to the appearance which the advertisement will have. It will be better if this is done with the typewriter. Then by drawing a number of parallel lines an idea of the space to be occupied for the small (body) type can be afforded. It is customary to give a letter to this space, and by the side of the same letter to write in the margin the copy to be inserted here. You will have remembered the value of contrast, and for this reason not only will you have placed the bold, black-faced type to stand out against the smaller body type, but you will also avoid the very common practice of using too much display, or you will just defeat the intention which prompted you to use display at all. In order to get exactly the effect in his mind the expert copy-writer indicates by the side of the copy the different types the compositor is to use both as to size and style. Finally, to prevent mistakes, a note will be



added that the advertisement is to be "set to 6 in. double column" or whatever the size may be.

There are many agencies in London and elsewhere who undertake the advertising of various manufacturing firms. These frequently are glad of outside assistance from competent journalists, especially if possessed of new ideas. The writing of booklets, for instance, is often done by journalists chiefly engaged in other work, and the prices paid will be found to compare favourably with the remuneration given for articles in the magazines. But apart from booklets on special subjects which may necessitate some amount of research, there are opportunities for the free-lance to show his originality. Copy-writing, however, demands a continuous flow of ideas and a brain that is as flexible as elastic so as to be able to adapt itself to the selling qualifications of a score of articles and many more different publics. The commercial journalist must be on the look out for topical events that he can use for his copy. He must be ready to adapt himself to any new phase, and to alter entirely the nature of the copy he has been accustomed to write. He has to watch the trend of public opinion and be ready with ideas and copy to meet any attack that may be made by rival advertisers. To a knowledge of the weaknesses of humanity he must bring a sound judgment, a freedom from convention, and a special knowledge of a new kind of journalism that has barely grown to maturity.

As he proceeds to learn the rudiments of his art he will learn a number of interesting points which

show the close relation that exists between humanity and journalism. For instance, he will be taught, and this statement will speedily be verified by experience, that the public loves to be instructed and commanded by advertisement. An advertisement which begins by imparting interesting but not generally known information will be closely followed because the reader feels that he is getting something for nothing. Similarly an advertisement which says "Send a post card to-day for one of our catalogues" will have more effect than if the advertisement had simply said that a catalogue would be sent gratis on request. Better still is the command which is accompanied with a reason-why. Thus such a phrase as "Buy the Perfecta mantles and save half your gas bill" instantly obtains the attention it desires. The great buying public is like a woman who likes to be ruled and led. When the advertisement provides, as many nowadays do, a slip to be torn off and the reader's address to be filled in, the instruction "Cut this out and post to-day" has never been known to disappoint the advertiser. The reason is that it concentrates advertising energy and fixes the mind of the reader to do at once what he is thinking of. Commercial journalism may not be the highest form of literary expression, but it is certainly a profession for which there is a demand for capable men with ideas and experience.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE BIG LONDON DAILIES

THE backbone of English journalism undoubtedly exists in the big London "dailies." Their high traditions, the amount of capital behind them, the proximity to the place where many of the most important events occur, the special relation which they bear in regard to leaders of political thought, and consequently the opportunity which they have of obtaining the most valuable news at first hand—these considerations, taken together with others of scarcely inferior import, have contrived to make the London morning newspaper something solid, dignified, admirable. It is fitting therefore that we should say something about so conspicuous a feature of the study before us.

There is in the metropolis a certain space of territory, containing but a few acres, bounded on the west by Wellington Street, Strand, and on the east by Printing House Square, which space contains the offices not merely of all the big newspapers and many other periodicals too, but the various news agencies which supply so much of the matter that appears in the London and provincial press. Every night throughout the year unceasingly into this little

space is heaped all the news from the uttermost parts of the world on every topic likely to interest the newspaper reader. Hither it all comes by telegraph, cable, telephone, wireless telegraphy, motor car, bicycle, tape machine, steamer and train. And every night this enormous collection of the world's happenings is sifted and prepared before being presented on the breakfast tables of the country the next morning.

Far away to the west, then, in its fine new buildings opposite the Gaiety Theatre is situated the *Morning Post*. Each big daily, though primarily it exists for the dissemination of news, has a personality of its own as well as its own peculiar public. The influence of the *Morning Post* in political and social circles owes much to the wise rule of its former proprietor, the late Lord Glenesk. Still unpolluted by the baser if more enterprising features of what is called even in this country "yellow journalism," the *Morning Post* represents all that is dignified and sober in the British character. There used to be an excellent regulation on this paper, which I believe still holds good, that no reference should be made in a leading article to a person which would prevent the writer from meeting that person at dinner the next day on any terms other than one would meet a friend. And this wholesome spirit pervades a journal that finds its welcome in homes of refinement that shun the vulgar and sensational screechings of the cheaper papers. The *Morning Post*, having been established in 1772, is the oldest daily paper in London. The special attention which it always devotes to foreign and political affairs and the



activities of Society, the excellence of its literary columns, the special features which it made of military matters under Mr. Spencer Wilkinson, have been appreciated by the class of readers for whom such news is provided. In many other respects the working of the *Morning Post* differs but little from other journals that are published every morning in London. Although the editor writes very little himself, his work on the *Morning Post* is enormous, and the amount of unseen labour in organising and furthering the interest of the paper is inconceivable except by those who actually know. There are not many of the hours of the clock when the editor is not in his office at work, but it is from eight in the evening until four the next morning that he is especially busy. Before this his heavy correspondence has to be gone through and dealt with, but it is at about eleven in the evening that the important consideration of the policy of the paper takes place and the leader-writers set to work in their endeavour to acquire and present to the reader, within two hours only, a clear, forcible statement of the topic immediately pressing in importance. The quality of versatility in the journalist is indeed nowhere more aptly illustrated than in the work of the leader-writer, especially where he happens to find himself on one of the old-fashioned dailies which still devote considerable space to leaders. Literally at the eleventh hour the announcement of some sudden and striking news may come in from the House of Commons or from the provinces or abroad. It is a principle of life that nothing is independent, that no

event can occur without having its effect on others. Consequently the leader-writer has, in a few brief moments, to foresee all that this new happening is likely to bring about. What its result will be as regards his own country, his own party, and the average reader, has to be guessed with the accuracy of the prophet. If the subject is abstruse and not easily comprehended, this "servant of the public" has to wade through the intricacies of the case as a barrister seeking to make a difficult point in the presence of a jury of ordinary intelligence; and having informed himself through the medium of the handy reference library with the help of its skilled librarian and other assistants, the leader-writer sits down and under the almost impersonal "we" tells the reader in the traditional manner of his paper the points of the new development in affairs, sets out on the one hand the "pros" and on the other the "cons." Here he is writing to inform many thousands of his own countrymen on a matter of which, when he came into the office an hour or two ago he knew next to nothing at all. But he has fulfilled the duty of the journalist, which, as I have submitted before, is not to know everything, but to be able to gather every information and to present it in its most attractive style.

In Fleet Street as we pass eastwards are the offices of the *Standard* and the *Evening Standard* and *St. James's Gazette* and *Daily Express*, all under the command of Mr. C. Arthur Pearson. In the olden days the *Standard* relied for a very considerable part of its support on provincial readers, whose first

object in reading its columns was not to have its breath taken away by extraordinary happenings and headlines that almost started out from the page, but to have quietly and in good taste put before them a calm announcement of the more important happenings of the day though not necessarily the most interesting and popular. As the influence of other and cheaper journals began to be felt, and the taste in news-telling was modified, many readers found that the *Standard* was dull and overweighted with its own dignity, and the position which it occupied in popularity was not as high as formerly. But at length it came under the care of Mr. Pearson, and whilst preserving all the attractiveness which it enjoyed, the paper was modernised and the lighter side of life was treated more attractively. Similarly something had to be done with that respectable old evening journal the *Evening Standard*, with its limited circulation and lack of enterprise. One of its important features was its intelligence concerning Stock Exchange and financial news, and a certain section of the public recognised its reliability for information connected with the racecourse. At the same time existed the *St. James's Gazette*, which had had a varied career under different proprietors and incidentally had been the cause of much financial loss. At the same time it was an interesting paper, popular among educated people, with a fair news-service, containing much social and literary information besides general news and short articles. But with the amalgamation of the two, under the heading of the *Evening Standard and St. James's Gazette*, not



merely all the attractiveness of both has been preserved but an additional personality and interest of its own. The size and shape were altered so as to make it more readable and more tempting to advertisers. The type is of such a kind that the artificial light in which for the greater part of the year evening papers are read is no drawback. The feature of the Woman's Page has been eminently successful with its gossip and fashions, sufficient in amount to entertain the wife of the city man after he has read the paper in the train and thrown it aside on arrival home. The risks belonging to an evening paper are in some respects greater than in conducting a morning journal, for the reason that though not so large an initial expense is incurred the chances of success are fewer. Whilst the morning paper circulates all over the metropolis, and for that matter all over the world, the evening paper is almost entirely a local organ. Its life is short and extends only between the closing of most business offices and bedtime, although during the whole day smaller editions are brought out, which unless in exceptional times add but little to what has been told in the morning papers. In the summer months, when most people are out of town, the circulation drops in greater proportion than the big "dailies" suffer, for the reason that in every town the latter can be obtained, but the demand for the more ephemeral and local paper is not such as ensures its being sent on to the same extent from town to town.

The *Evening Standard* and *St. James's Gazette* owes much to the advantage of having at its dis-



posal the news-service of the *Daily Express*, and, in like manner, the *Evening News* and the *Star* benefit by the service of the *Daily Mail* and the *Morning Leader* respectively. The *Westminster Gazette* has now also acquired a service for a more adequate news-supply, whilst the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *Globe* stand in a sphere of their own in this respect. The enterprise and progressive policy of the *Evening News* belong to that category which includes papers which make news as well as chronicle it. The speed with which it publishes its information, being frequently the first in the field, the popular attractiveness of its serial stories, written for a certain class of readers, to whom the more literary novel is less desirable, the bright manner in which its news is told, even if scrappily and jerkily, have given this journal a circulation that is very large, whilst among experts the success of the *Star* is said to be due to the fact that it is the best sub-edited paper in London. It cannot boast of the excellence of literary fare which the *Westminster* provides, nor of the restrained, cautious policy of the *Pall Mall*, but for its progressiveness it rivals the *Evening News*, to which also it bears many other points of similarity.

But it is when we come to the paper with a "daily circulation five times as large as that of any penny London morning journal" that we find all that is cleverest, most popular (and in some respects most unpopular) in English journalism. The coming of the *Daily Mail* has done for English journalism much that is undoubtedly good, and

much that is open to criticism. It brought about a much closer relation between the paper and the reader, and the old-time loftiness and *hauteur* of the stiff-as-starch daily paper have been greatly modified by the coming of the younger journalism. If one be asked to say in the fewest words to what the enormous success of the *Daily Mail* is due, it would not be inaccurate to state that it is owing to the fact that it has aimed at printing not merely that news which is important, but that which to the man and woman of the middle-class is of the greatest attraction. The keynote, as one learns in the *Daily Mail* office, is *human interest*, and in no part of the paper is this exhibited more clearly than on the page which contains the "home" news. It is this force which determines to what length a news-item shall be allowed: it is this which settles whether it shall have a double or a single-lined heading, whether it shall be placed in an obscure or prominent part of the paper or not. The principle which regulates the *Times* is in opposition to this spirit, but the aim of the *Thunderer* is less to be interesting than exceedingly accurate and reliable.

If, then, the primary success of this most progressive daily paper is due to its interesting contents, the praise must be given to the ability with which it is sub-edited. Every proprietor knows and admits that the greatest acquisition a paper can possibly have is a good staff of sub-editors, and if for any reason this supply were to die out the popularity of the *Daily Mail*, in spite of all its

wonderful organisation and its preparedness for any change in the taste of the public, would instantly suffer. It has been said that above every sub-editor's desk should be written in letters of gold the following words : " Cut and cover." This exactly sums up the man's duties. He cuts down the long verbose speech to a small paragraph containing the pith of the narrative : he extracts from pages and pages of description of an event only so much as is unusual. From the law cases he takes only that which is of human interest, and for this purpose omits much of what counsel has to say in his brilliant speech on behalf of the plaintiff in the breach of promise case, but reprints *in extenso* those of her letters read in court for the interest which all who have hearts and imaginative sympathy will find therein.

Although the idea of a halfpenny morning newspaper dates as far back as fifty years ago, when such a journal was established in Scotland, the experiment was singularly unfortunate, and the paper died after a few days' existence. In 1892 the *Morning Leader* and the *Morning*, two separate journals, both made their appearance at the price of a halfpenny. The latter died from want, but the former, though having a circulation inferior to that of the *Daily Mail*, is still vigorously alive and receives much support among the working classes. In 1894 the idea came to Mr. Alfred Harmsworth, now Lord Northcliffe, to launch a morning newspaper designed specially to meet the needs of the busy man, to save him the time in



ferreting out the news of the day by putting before him by means of first-class sub-editing the whole news at a glance. This was the primary idea of founding the *Daily Mail*: to make it a halfpenny paper was a secondary consideration, and already there was the *Morning Leader* in the field with that innovation. The busy-man's paper, then, began to be planned out as far back as the beginning of the year 1894, or two years after the *Morning Leader* had been started, but it was not until May 4th in 1896 that the first issue of the *Daily Mail* took place. During this time a vast amount of work was going on, and much money was being spent, in spite of the fact that no revenue was coming in. The inaugurators did not take the foolish step which has wrecked more than one daily paper since and before of *rushing* into print, but made the most perfect and complete preparations to guard against every contingency which was likely to happen. To this end, after getting together a singularly able and industrious staff of journalists in London, and having taken considerable pains to select picked men in all parts of the globe as "our correspondents," opening offices in New York, Paris, and elsewhere long before ever the paper saw light, the idea of the new journal was set firmly on its feet. In 1895 the first building for the *Daily Mail* was erected.

The amount of capital involved before ever a daily paper can be started varies between £100,000 and £250,000. The ill-fated *Tribune* had, I believe, as much as £300,000 behind it, and yet did not pay



its way. In the case of the *Daily Mail* the initial expense was something enormous. Besides the cost of building, the purchase of expensive machinery of the latest kind, the outlay in advertising, there was the cost of the staff and the working of the paper. For although this did not make its appearance until May 4th, yet from February 15th the paper was sub-edited and edited, set up in type, printed and issued every week-day, though not a copy was ever seen by the public. Think for a moment of the expense! Cables were being sent from all quarters of the world, news agencies were supplying their matter, the news-gathering staff was going everywhere for news, the linotypes and printing machines were as active as if the paper were being sold, and yet no one was allowed to buy a copy of one of the sheets. All this meant the necessity of having a capital of about half a million of money before the public bought a copy, and the actual amount spent, before the first issue was made, in salaries, labour, paper, contributions, and telegrams, was £40,000. To begin with, it was estimated that to print 150,000 copies per day would about represent the size of the circulation. The sales of the first day, however, reached the significant figures of 397,215, and the average daily sale for the first month was 171,121. The machinery provided was found to be unable to cope with so surprising a circulation, and additional machinery had to be sought elsewhere. This was found by using that of an evening paper and of two large printing companies, until such time as new plant could be laid

down. By the first of September the circulation had gone up to 222,405 copies, and exactly two years from the day it was first issued, the daily sales exceeded 300,000. In October 1898 the daily sale was over half a million copies, and a year later it was nearly 800,000, while in June 1903 its average was 873,000.

It is only fair to point out that, besides the intrinsic merits of the paper and the benefits accruing from good organisation and management, the *Daily Mail* was favoured with good luck on more than one occasion. The coming of the Boer War blew an ill wind to most people, but it afforded an opportunity for rousing the interest of the general reader, and the *Daily Mail* used this to the full. By not merely sending out to South Africa its brilliant war correspondent, the late Mr. G. W. Steevens, but by organising a staff of its own news-gatherers in South Africa, and at home running a special train from London to Manchester at a cost of £200 a week and more, the general public turned to the *Mail* because it was cheaper than the penny morning paper, because it reached them earlier, and finally because it contained such detailed news of the progress of the war. During this South African crisis the circulation went up beyond English records. Frequently it exceeded a million copies per day, and on the memorable occasion when the relief of Mafeking was announced, as many as 1,300,000 were sold. But even this amount was beaten on the morning after the death of Queen Victoria, when 1,494,000 copies were paid for. This amount, I believe,

represents the biggest figures the paper has ever achieved, although there is more than one Sunday paper in England whose sale is said to be well over a million copies.

As an outcome of the London to Manchester enterprise, the *Daily Mail* office in Manchester was established, where simultaneously with the London edition the *Daily Mail* is issued. Since then a special train to the west of England has been inaugurated, to enable the paper being placed in the hands of the readers at a much earlier hour than would otherwise have been possible. The secret of the continued success of this paper is attributable to the organisation which has been carried on, on the principle of division of labour, which has been used down to the most remote opportunity. Each director has his own department of activity : each chief of a section is an expert, and the salary of the departmental managers varies with the profit made by each department. If the circulation on a certain day shows diminution, then a firm inquiry must be made to find the reason why, and special steps will be taken to push the circulation in that locality which has shown a falling off. Except in running a theatrical company, there are few ways known to the ingenuity of man for losing money so quickly and thoroughly as in the newspaper business. Consequently, when the total cost of every issue of the *Daily Mail* represents £1,600, it is essential that the greatest care must be taken to see that all is going well. Even if you wish your circulation to remain about level, you must for ever



be engineering new schemes, finding out some new means of interesting the public, rousing its enthusiasm. A newspaper has even more women readers than men, and the feminine mind must everlastingly be fed with some novelty, or else she will turn her attention to some other and more progressive newspaper. Let there be a slacking off in enterprise, an instance here and there of missing some interesting or important news, a few errors of judgment in feeling the pulse of public opinion, and down comes the circulation after years of strenuous endeavour. With that, too, descends the amount of advertising matter that seeks entry into your columns, and with that, in turn, goes the greater part of your revenue. Prolong this a little while, and your enormous and terrific expenses will be found to be greater than your income: the last act of all follows inevitably. I believe the amount of income derived by the *Daily Mail* every year from advertisements, quite apart from what it obtains from the sale of the paper, is somewhere about £500,000.

If you go into the offices of the *Daily Mail* and see how this busy hive works, you will not be impressed by the narrow entrance, but the systematic manner in which even the working of the lift is carried out will immediately interest you. As you come upstairs you will find Lord Northcliffe's room luxurious, but the editor's den is plain and business-like, with telephones and electric bells at hand. Before five the editor is attending the daily conference with the departmental heads; at seven



o'clock he may go away to dinner, having come down to the office at midday. At six o'clock the day staff goes off, and the sub-editors and the rest of the night staff are ready to begin sifting the mass of news which has been collected during the past few hours. The arrangement of little tables for the sub-editors in a long narrow room with the chief sub-editor facing them at the end, resembles nothing so much as an examination hall. Other desks may be found for the special editors and such rare individuals as the weather expert, who comes and disappears like the winds and rain of which he prophesies. Then there is the tiny room where every night the Paris news comes in by telephone and is taken down in shorthand, written up, and sub-edited. All the day "our Paris correspondent" has been at work collecting everything likely to interest English readers, and at least half an hour is taken in its transmission by word of mouth.

Further on is the room where three or four expert operators are engaged at their instruments telegraphing the news to Manchester for simultaneous production. As the sub-editors in London finish a paragraph, it is sent upstairs to the composing room and the proof comes down. One copy of this proof is handed to the telegraphist, who has soon dispatched it across England to the north-west. As soon as the matter is received in Manchester, most of two hundred miles away, it is set up by the linotypes, and by the time the London edition is put on the machines the same amount of progress has been made in Lancashire.

Further enterprise was shown in the inauguration of the Paris edition of the *Daily Mail*, for by means of a direct communication through telegraph and telephone between the two capitals—a special wire being reserved for the *Daily Mail* between the hours of nine o'clock at night and three in the morning—the whole news of the London edition is transmitted each night to the Paris office, set up as in Manchester, and sent to press at 3 a.m., to be followed three hours later by what is known as the Boulevard edition containing also extracts from all the London papers which have appeared between the two editions of the Paris paper. By this means a circulation is obtained all over the Continent, and as far as Africa and Siberia. There are, too, the editions for the Blind and the Overseas.

I have thought it permissible to devote so much space to a consideration of the organising of the *Daily Mail*, for the fact that it occupies in modern journalism a place that is unique in England. What has been can be done, as has been said before; and given the opportunity and the men to appreciate the same, still further advances can be made in one of the most fascinating if difficult of professions.

Following on the success of the *Daily Mail*, came the *Daily Express* in the year 1900. The founder, Mr. C. Arthur Pearson, an old Wykehamist, has had a most interesting career. He entered the firm of Sir George Newnes by winning a competition in *Tit-Bits*. In order to get at the information required for the competition, he had to cycle sixty

miles three times a week to the nearest country library, and by dint of much perseverance—a quality that he has since exhibited to a conspicuous degree—he was fortunate in winning a post as clerk at a salary of £100 a year in Sir George Newnes' office. The story of his going one day to Sir George and asking for the vacant post of manager is well known. Anyway, his request was granted, and later on we find him founding the firm in Henrietta Street which produces *Pearson's Weekly* and many other publications. Finally came the issuing to the world of Mr. Pearson's halfpenny daily paper, which, if it has not succeeded to so large an extent as the *Daily Mail*, has a powerful circulation, and is reported to be especially popular among the London cabmen. When the paper was being launched, Mr. Pearson not merely inspected the general carrying out of his ideas, but himself worked in the office from ten in the morning until seven o'clock the next day in every department; and during the first six months of the paper's existence, this indefatigable "hustler" was frequently at his office from mid-day until three o'clock the next. It is still his custom to hold a daily conference with his various editors and assistants at six in the evening, in order to discuss the news and the line of action to be taken by the paper appearing the next day.

By 1904 the custom of paying a halfpenny for a morning paper had obtained so powerful a hold over the newspaper public, that it was not surprising that some of the penny papers began to suffer.



In this year the *Daily Chronicle*, and also the *Daily News*, reduced their price to a halfpenny with apparently happy results, since that price has been maintained. The fact was that the coming of the halfpenny journal, combined with the results which had followed on greater educational facilities and were now making themselves apparent, had created a habit of newspaper-reading among a class that was never accustomed to buy a penny morning paper. And now the poor artisan, the labourer, and the office boy purchase their journals with as much regularity as their employers. The newspapers are here and are likely to remain, even when the magazines and the weeklies show the most certain signs of moribundity.

The first appearance of the *Daily Mirror* as exclusively a woman's daily journal, proved by its colossal failure that the difference between the sexes is in reading matter not so conspicuous as in other respects. But the success which, by a sudden change of front, turned a failure into a handsome property has been complete and amazing. It represents, too, a clever move in extending much further the innovation which the *Daily Graphic* had made years before in making the daily newspaper bright and instructive with pictures of events. It is in this direction that the immediate future of English journalism is likely to develop. One may expect, too, that before long, with the improvements which are going on in respect of printing, colour will form an important part in the daily paper. An experiment was recently tried to



produce a popular weekly sheet in colours, but this has apparently not been successful.

The *Daily Telegraph* still remains at the price of a penny, with its many columns of reliable news and its exceedingly valuable amount of advertising matter. I asked once one of the most able of American journalists on a visit to this country, which of our big dailies struck him most favourably. The reply was not the one we should have expected from a journalist who, if any one, knew the value of the saffron-coloured papers of his own country. He answered that that he knew of no paper which "covered" every branch of news in a manner at once so thorough and dignified as the London *Daily Telegraph*. Its foreign correspondence is full and good; its criticisms of literary, artistic, and theatrical matters are sound and distinguished; whilst its general news, and the importance given to the leading article, accord with the standard of the best penny papers. But at a time when the penny morning paper was said to have passed its prime most people, both journalists and general readers, were surprised a few years ago to see the announcement of a new Liberal morning paper to appear at a penny and in size approximating to that of the *Daily Telegraph*. All sorts of unhappy prophecies were made with regard to the future of the *Tribune*, and its decease after some months proved that the pessimists were not wholly erroneous in their forecasts. Supplied with as much as £300,000 as capital, the *Tribune* had misjudged the demands of the times. Had its appearance been made years

before, it would no doubt have succeeded ; but with the *Morning Post*, the *Standard*, and the *Daily Telegraph* already in the field, there could be little hope for it even if its politics were opposed to those of the three papers just mentioned. Other attempts have been made recently in connection with the founding of a morning newspaper, notably Mr. Stead's *Daily Paper* and the halfpenny organ called the *Majority*, but both of these were not long in going over to join the vast number of lost causes.

It is not enough nowadays to have a large capital behind a newspaper. The public has been accustomed to receive so much for its money that unless it is given a newspaper at least as good, if not better, than what it has previously had at a cheap price, it can have little chance of success. This chance may be awaiting the man who brings out the perfect newspaper in colours on novel lines, containing all the news of the morning in pictures. It will need an immense amount of capital and brains, but it will also postulate a wonderful amount of courage and self-confidence. Perhaps these essentials may come, but the time is not yet.

## CHAPTER XV

### AMERICAN JOURNALISM

It is fitting that, in a handbook to English journalism, something should be said in reference to the methods prevailing in America which have, in spite of characteristic British obstinacy, exercised an influence over our own press that is considerable. While it is true that English journalism has its own traditions and ideals entirely different from those across the Atlantic, yet the editors and newspaper proprietors of our own country are ever on the look-out for the newest methods and ideas brought into use in the United States. Indeed, to such an extent is this practised, that I have heard New York editors complain indignantly of the way in which their cleverest schemes are copied faithfully and unblushingly by those responsible for the production of journals in this country. No sooner, say they, is a magazine of a unique kind brought out, than it is followed a few weeks later by an English imitation: as soon as a novel means is discovered for increasing the circulation of a daily newspaper, the same method, or one but slightly modified, is adopted in England. If, then, the future of English journalism is likely to be influenced

yet again by the United States, let us look into some of the forces which are obtaining in New York and other centres of that country.

I make a difference between American journalism and American literature: for the latter was until comparatively recently merely an echo of English literature, and it is only now that the newer nation is getting its own school of authors distinct and independent from those of our own country. But for a long time prior to this, the tendency of the American nation was to find its expression not in art or literature, but in oratory and journalism. A newly formed community, full of activity and of unbounded enthusiasm, had neither the opportunity nor the patience to write books, and there were as few ready to read them when written. It is even paradoxical that in America, where individualism is pushed to its furthest extreme, authorship should have been obscured by impersonal journalism; but, thanks to special facilities, the United States has been singularly encouraged to develop its newspapers rather than its books. Long before the English newspaper attained anything like its modern popularity, the American journal was prospering exceedingly. There were no advertisement taxes, no paper duties, and so the cost of production was lower. Forty years before England obtained its popular journalism America was enjoying such benefits, and, less lofty and dignified than was ours, the American newspaper was in a much closer relation to the lives and minds of its readers. It sought to hold up with great



fidelity the mirror to life, even if it failed so to do this in an artistic manner.

To this day the American newspaper has the reputation of the world for printing the most news—not always reliable—and giving in actual size and paper-area the best value for the money. The amount of advertisements carried means so enormous a revenue, that all sorts of risks and expenses may be confidently incurred. The American nation believed in advertising long before we did, and in return newspaper proprietors were enabled to give the readers better value in news service. The amount of literary matter, for instance, in the Sunday editions of such papers as the *New York Herald* or the *New York World*, is to English readers simply prodigious: we have nothing in the least like it. No one ever expects that each individual reader will wade through all this matter, but the subjects covered are so well arranged and presented in so attractive a manner, that the widest possible circle of readers is provided for and an already large circulation maintained. To English readers the scare-headings and the sensational type which is used to blaze these forth, seem in bad taste and unnecessary. But, just as in judging of the actions of individuals in a certain century, it is only fair to have regard to the contemporary customs and mind of the people, so in like manner American journalism must be judged not by comparison with English standards, but with regard to the people for whom it is conducted. The American is a highly strung, excitable individual, the cause of which is found

partly in the invigorating atmosphere, partly in the hereditary activity of mind and body which in a newly developed country should be essential. As evidence of this hysteria, one has only to point to the extraordinary waves of enthusiasm which are always pouring over the United States, to the sudden panics and other manifestations. Consequently, a body of readers made up from a class possessing such characteristics, could find no interest in a paper that was anything but lively and fed the flames of their own excitable natures. English readers are rapidly becoming more susceptible to the lash of the newspaper, and the amount of enthusiasm which can be summoned up by a halfpenny paper is now one of the most interesting phenomena of our own time.

The leading article in American newspapers plays a part less notable than in our dailies. The American cares less for the opinions of others than for his own conclusions. The long succession of pioneers and emigrants, themselves men and women of distinct and individual character, has left its mark, and to-day the United States is less a nation than a collection of individuals. It is not surprising, then, that that most personal of all journalistic efforts, the interview, should have had its origin in America long before it became popular in England. Like their buildings, which are erected but for the present and not for all time, the American newspaper concentrates all its energies on the present, letting the future care for itself. The topic of the time is run for all it is worth, and exploited by every means in a well-organised office. But the moment the heat of

excitement cools off, the incident is left suddenly and severely alone. At the same time it must not be forgotten that this wonderful enterprise, this determination to succeed at all costs, has with it grave defects that cannot be ignored. Nothing is left sacred, no privacy is regarded, few exaggerations are deemed unworthy if the interest and excitement can be kept up. And yet when all this is allowed for, the achievements of some of the American news-gatherers in their race for exclusive news deserve to stand out in the history of journalism. The American nation owes to its reporters not only condemnation for things that had been better left unsaid, but praise for obtaining valuable and interesting information on occasions when it was next to impossible to obtain it. And in passing censure some allowance must be made for human nature and the demands of a curious public which have to be met by an editor and his band of workers. The reporter has to gather his news in a hurry and flurry, and then transmit the same to his paper without always the chance of verifying his facts.

The wonderful "beats" which American journalists have obtained over their rivals include the exciting adventures of the handful of news-gatherers sent from New York and Philadelphia to chronicle the news of the famous Johnstown flood, the scene of which could not be reached by rail. Bridges were found to have been swept away, rivers had to be forded, and a hundred and twenty-four miles to be covered in twenty-four hours, including the traversing of considerable mountains. Then a difficult gorge



had to be negotiated, and in order to obtain a guide the enterprising reporters roused a farmer from his bed at midnight by pretending to be highwaymen. At last more dead than alive they reached Johnstown, and worked for two days collecting facts and transmitting them along the telegraph wire.

One cannot praise the American reporter in the following incident for his good taste, but one can admire his ingenuity at getting information. A well-known man had died, and the reporter had been commissioned to go to the house of the deceased to get materials for an obituary notice. On ringing at the door the indignant head of the brother of the deceased man was thrust out of a window. Not unnaturally information was declined. "Very well," shouted back the reporter, "then it is true that your brother did commit suicide." Immediately the living brother capitulated and came down to the door, and told the reporter not only that the report of suicide was false but a good deal of the kind of copy that was desired by the reporter. Similar successful ruses have been adopted to find out criminals, and sometimes even when the whole detective force has been unavailing American reporters have not only tracked down the criminal but extorted from his own lips a confession of the guilty deed. Brilliant, too, was the effort of the New York reporter to get the news through of the blowing up of the *Maine* during the Spanish-American war. The report was purposely being delayed, although Washington had news of it. The reporter's task was to deceive the vigilant



eye of the censor if possible, and in this he almost succeeded, so he handed in the following dispatch :  
“ Please note that the Maine story is *mine*.” This, however, was detected and not allowed to pass, so the reporter made another effort. He got ready an apparently innocent message, in the middle of which he mentioned casually that the naval officers in Havana were discussing Kipling’s poem of “ The Destroyer,” and especially praising the technical accuracy of the last stanza. But unhappily for the brilliant reporter the censor happened to refer to the stanza, which reads as follows :—

“The doom that in the darkness spread  
The mine that lifts the main :  
The white-hot wake, the ’wilderling speed—  
The choosers of the Slain.”

And so what would have been a wonderfully clever “ beat ” became only a disappointing attempt. Equally ineffective was the story told me by an American war-correspondent of his Chicago colleague who had been sent out to the front by his newspaper during the Russo-Japanese war. Unhappily the war-correspondent had the bad luck to get shut in at a place where it was impossible to get news of the progress of the war. His finances were rapidly running out, and only the sharp, short, eloquent message of “ Send a thousand dollars ” reached the editorial office instead of the news which he had been sent out to gather.

I submit, though many will feel inclined to disagree with me, that in regard to humorists,

both writers and illustrators, America is a long way ahead of us. The amount of space devoted to this section of the paper is far greater than an English journal would allow. Coloured supplements are issued, dealing with comic and other illustrated matter, and the importance given to caricatures is greater than we assign in England in papers of general interest. The pertinacity with which artists day after day produce cartoon after cartoon is remarkable. Inside a New York editorial and business office the division of labour has been carried out to its finest point. In the *New York Herald* building, for instance, a paper which is regarded by some as old-fashioned and conservative, whose outside pages are wholly devoted to advertising, and the news placed inside with only moderately displayed headings, the basement is devoted to the printing presses, the floor above to the reception of advertisements, and thence ascending up the big staircase one enters a maze of small rooms, each devoted to the head of a particular department. There are the various editors and sub-editors and specialists, as already indicated, together with the departments for dealing with photography, reproduction, printing, and distribution. Every man in the building, from the compositor on the top floor to the machine-minder in the basement, has been picked out as being as nearly as possible the ideal individual for the work before him, and there is a look manifested on their faces as if the choice had been a correct one. To watch such a paper as the *New York Herald* going

to press after one has stepped out from an evening in one of the theatres on Broadway, and to notice the keen, orderly hustle that is going on so that the paper may be got ready for being dispatched over the whole American continent, is to study one of the most perfectly organised institutions to be seen anywhere.

If we were to take the elevator and ascend eighteen or twenty storeys up the Flat Iron Building at the junction of Fifth Avenue and Broadway, and look into the editorial offices of the *Munsey Magazine* and its associated journals, we should find that the same excellent organisation obtains, and that system was carried out to the minutest essential. However prosperous magazines have been in England, we have never been able to attain to such excellence as the *Century*, *Scribner's*, and *Harper's*, nor to such sensational circulation as *Everybody's* possessed during the period when it ran "The Frenzied Finance" articles by Thomas W. Lawson. The *Ladies' Home Journal*, with a circulation of well over a million every month, its varied contents, its exceedingly valuable advertisement-revenue, is the envy of every English editor and newspaper proprietor. But the care with which the advertisements are printed in American magazines, the excellence of the actual paper, the trouble that is undergone to make good illustrations and blocks, tempt the advertiser to avail himself of these pages, and allow of increased expense for the improvement of the literary and artistic pages.

It must not be thought that all the daily papers of New York are "yellow." Such journals as the *Tribune*, *Times*, *Herald*, and *Sun* are enterprising without being as sensational as the Hearst throng. The designation "yellow" originated in a curious way. One or two journals used to have in the coloured supplement a child dressed in a yellow frock, known as the "yellow kid." The adventures of this child, like the adventures of "Buster Brown," were watched with keen interest from week to week, and the newspapers having pictures of the "yellow kid" began to be known as the yellow journals. Afterwards the nickname was applied to the most enterprising and daring of the journals, and the adjective has also spread to England. Mr. Hearst, a man still in the prime of life, possessed of colossal capital, has covered the American continent with his papers, whose character can only be described as eccentric and pushful beyond all American standards. Mr. Hearst has himself drawn a difference between the journals which do things and those which only chronicle them, and the fearless, reckless manner in which these papers are conducted, regardless of personalities and men in high places, has obtained for its owner as much popularity as abuse. The Hearst policy has been briefly and aptly expressed as one of "stepping with spiked boots on thieves—individuals or corporations alike."

We are not unaccustomed in England to the magazine which to-day is, and to-morrow is not, But these meteoric flashes are of rarer occurrence



than in America, where it is just possible that the periodical may look sufficiently attractive on the "news-stands" to compel purchase. For to the American mind something new has immediately a sale of its own, and the beautiful manner in which the cover designs are reproduced has a compelling charm. This feature is run even to abnormal lengths in the newer country. I remember the case of one New York publisher who admitted that a certain novel was very poor stuff indeed, but that the cover was so fascinating that he who saw it was compelled to buy the book. It was a matter of surprise to him that no English publisher was willing to negotiate with him in respect of publishing the same novel and cover in England. In the American magazines the topical article is even of greater importance than in England, but the American public has a greater desire for instruction, and articles of the "highly informative" type are appreciated. Of course each magazine has its own peculiar bill of fare, and it is only by studying its contents that the would-be contributor can expect to be successful. There is no reason at all why English writers should not contribute more frequently to the American magazines. The payment is certainly good. Such magazines as *Munsey's* will remunerate the writer at the rate of five cents a word; and supposing the article consists of 3000 words that means receiving more than £30. Articles for this kind of periodical vary from about 1500 to 3000 words in length. English matters recording interesting efforts towards

progress are acceptable, and good photographs will be well paid for.

As regards the kind of short stories required by the American magazines a wag has given as a recipe for the *Munsey* the following: "A young man and woman, the best in the market, should first be procured. Crush in separate bowls of emotion until both are powdered. Then dash together hastily and deftly (a *faux pas* here means utter failure), adding some extract of sugared almonds. Serve in artistic rounds." For the *Smart Set* the writer should "select only souls with affinities; these may be recognised by having been long in the market, and by fly-specks. After beating, mix thoroughly with the whites of soulful eyes." Then for the *Century* you should "prepare a thick batter consisting of one well-seasoned, middle-aged man with sociological theories from the hothouse of prosperity. Add a generous pinch of retrospection, and, after the mixture ferments, stir in a *soupçon* of an ineffectual young man. While the whole is now simmering over a slow fire, make a dressing of adversity, and an interesting woman. The order cited is not essential; the elements are interchangeable; but the cake must be served leisurely and in generous sections."

With regard to serial-writing, there is a market in the United States for those which have the strong love interest but even more powerful dramatic interest. I remember entering the office once of one of the largest magazines in America. From the conversation that was just ending between the

editor and one of his contributors, it would have been reasonable to have supposed that a murder was being arranged. "What shall I do with the old man?" asked a visitor, preparing to depart; "shall I have him killed on the spot?" The editor thought for a moment and swung round in his chair. "Why no," he answered, "I guess I'd let him have a paralytic seizure, and end off right there." Then I knew it was merely the ending of a serial that was being discussed. "What we want," said the same editor, "is the kind of story in which the instalment ends with the hero hanging on to the branch of a slender tree, with a clear five-hundred-feet drop below"; in other words, the popular magazines of the all-fiction type want not subtlety of plot or character but down-right melodrama. "The stories I want," said a New York editor not long ago, "are the stories that get busy from the start, and stop the instant the interest ceases." "In my opinion," wrote another American editor in returning a manuscript because it was too artistic, "in my opinion the average reader is not a judge of literary style. All he knows is whether he likes the story he is reading or whether he does not like it. He does not want to wade through a column or so of material simply to reach an artistic finish. I want stories where the attention or interest is aroused in the opening paragraph." The editor of the *Youth's Companion*, Boston, has many openings for those who are able to write for boys and girls. The departments in which there are most vacancies and therefore the best chances of acceptance are,

first, stories of general interest, humorous, and of adventure. These should be of a length from 1200 to 2000 words. Secondly, stories of interest to boys, of other than adventurous interest, are acceptable. In this case the length should be from 3000 to 4000 words. Girls' stories of a similar length are also welcomed.

But in laying down suggestions to guide contributors to magazines both English and American, inasmuch as periodicals are frequently changing their editors, proprietors, and policy, one cannot emphasise too much the importance of watching the contents of the periodical before writing.



## CHAPTER XVI

### FRENCH JOURNALISM

THE influence of American journalism has spread not merely to London but to Paris also, and that infectious spirit of enterprise and activity has been assimilated by the French almost as much as it has by the English. Not so very long since the French journal was a meagre half-starved affair, with a totally inadequate news-service, a few scattered items of happenings gathered mostly from unreliable sources, and the whole thing badly printed from bad type. But since then a vast change has taken place. London and New York have set the pace and Paris has followed. The importance of the signed article, which has always been so conspicuous a feature of French journalism, still remains ; in fact French journals have employed the services of authors as distinct from journalists far more than the English press has deemed advisable, notwithstanding the fact that the *Daily Mail* has frequently commissioned authors of the first rank to contribute to its literary page on a special subject. But there is a tradition in French journalism that is distinctly more literary than journalistic. Such names as Maurice Maeterlinck, Anatole France, Jules Claretie,

Gabriel Hanotaux, Marcel Prévost, and many other distinguished literateurs have all provided signed *articles de fond*. And though now the trend of French journalism is to supply news rather than literature, yet the new style will not utterly have replaced the old for some time to come.

Such a paper as the *Gaulois* belongs rather to the days of the Empire. "We stand," said one of the ablest members of its staff to me once, "for the Church and the King." With Republicanism it has no sympathies, still less with Judaism, and it is a remarkable fact that M. Arthur Meyer, the director of this intensely Royalist journal, was himself once a Jew and only a few years ago was received into the Church. But the popularity of the *Gaulois* type of journal is on the wane.

The *Matin*, with its six pages and its excellent news-service for five centimes, is not yet thirty years old, yet it is full of life and energy, and in many respects is to the French reader what the *Daily Telegraph* is to us. It is interested in politics like any other French journal, but before that in importance it values news. For this end it has its own private wire between Paris and London, its London office being in the building occupied by the *Times*, as any one passing down Queen Victoria Street may observe. The *Matin*, although it is more reliable than many of the more enterprising American journals, would come under the class of those papers which Mr. Hearst designated as the kind that not merely chronicled news but made it, and the reader will still remember the great walking contest which

the enterprise of this journal inaugurated some years ago, and gave to the *Matin* a wide and valuable advertisement. The *Matin* belongs also to that kind of journal which is not afraid of hitting and hitting hard, and is always ready to attack a public scandal, whilst at the same time it is possessed of considerable sound common sense as expressed in its policy. The important part played by the *Matin* in investigating the Humbert swindle is well known. The *Temps* has been established about half a century, and is still full of interest.

Whereas in England and America the journalist usually preserves his anonymity and loses his personality in the general character of the paper, in France he is a public man, as in our country is the actor and the member of Parliament. We have already referred to the importance given to the signed article, but besides this the French journalist is frequently also a keen politician who delights in "making it hot" for his enemies, regardless of the fact that he may have to pay the penalty of his outspoken utterances if not in duel then perhaps in prison. The names of Rochefort and Clemenceau are well known for the amount of force which is behind their pens.

The modern organisation of the Paris journal resembles very closely that which obtains in a London editorial office, but there are some points of dissimilarity. First in supreme command comes the "Directeur," whose name, contrary to British custom, is usually printed at the top of the front page of the journal. This director is rather the guiding

spirit than the actual conductor of the journal. Immediately under him in authority comes the editor or "rédacteur en chef," who is responsible for the welfare of the paper. The "chef d'information" controls the news brought in by the outside staff, while the man in charge of the well-known column of "echoes," so familiar a feature of French journals, is known as the "échetier." The chief sub-editor is called the "secrétaire de la Rédaction," but contrary to the custom which obtains in our own country the best paid member of the general staff is the dramatic critic, and the position which he occupies on the paper in Paris is such that the time for going to press will be delayed to the last possible moment on the night of an important *première*. But the dramatic sense is so bound up with the Latin character that it is but natural that its influence should be found expressed also in its press.

The English halfpenny journal finds its counterpart in such papers as *Le Petit Journal* and *Le Petit Parisien*, where for a sou, besides an excellent service of news, will be found also literary criticisms of a high standard. The rivalry which goes on between these two journals in their race for popularity is of the keenest. Until comparatively recently the former claimed to have the largest newspaper circulation in the world, but *Le Petit Parisien* now states that to itself belongs "le plus fort tirage des journaux du monde entier." But leaving for a moment the question as to which is the leader in matter of figures, it is nothing short of



remarkable to observe the enormous circle of readers to be obtained by a newspaper in France. Thus, during the year 1903, when the famous counting competition became a craze, as many as two and a half million copies were sold of the *Petit Parisien* a day. Not unnaturally at the close of the competition the circulation dropped from this sensational amount, but even then the managing proprietor, M. Dupuy, informed its shareholders that an average daily circulation of 1,200,000 copies could be relied upon. Even the *Daily Mail*, on the occasion of the death of Queen Victoria, when its record circulation was reached, sold only 1,494,000 copies. This in itself was enormous, but compared with the two and a half millions of the French journal mentioned above it seems of little consequence.

Nor must we suppose that the French newsgatherers are inferior to their English or American confrères when exceptional ingenuity has to be displayed in the race for news. We mentioned the case just now of the American reporter who overcame the difficulty of interviewing the brother of a recently deceased man. Let us see how they do such things in France. One day a certain French journalist set out to interview Emile Zola. The author of *L'Assommoir* had at all times the greatest objection to being interviewed, and at the particular time of which we are speaking his attitude was even still more opposed to such a concession, for the air was full of the *affaire Dreyfus*. The reporter was equally aware of the disposition which

Zola possessed, and so hit upon a scheme of his own. Arrived at the door of the novelist's home, the reporter gravely told the servant to inform his master that François Coppée lay dying. The effect was immediate, for Zola, alarmed at the sudden news of his distinguished friend, came running out to ask the informant for further details. It was then that the journalist acknowledged that M. Coppée was not dying though he was indisposed. The reporter confessed that he had but made use of that means of reaching M. Zola so as to obtain his opinion on a certain matter. It is said that after the first wave of anger and irritation had passed off, the famous novelist admitted the young man and gave him the information for his paper that he desired.

Besides the improvement which has taken place in the daily papers of France one must not forget the enterprise which characterises the weekly and monthly periodicals. Such papers as *Femina*, *La Vie Heureuse*, and such well-edited monthlies as *Je Sais Tout* and *Lectures pour Tous* are, in regard both of letterpress and illustration, admirable productions. Already the French have their special journals devoted to literary, artistic, and sporting subjects, and on many of these the influence of America and England is very marked. A certain amount of matter is taken from English writers, but the prices paid by French journals are so small as not usually to tempt the English journalist. The chief hope for the man or woman who desires that a part of his income shall proceed

from French journalism lies in the possibility of his being commissioned to send a London letter to each issue. There are aspects, too, of English life which if illustrated by good photos make attractive articles in the French monthlies and weeklies ; but when the photographer has been paid and the time and cost of translating have been reckoned up, there is not much monetary reward in the end. At the same time it is only fair to add that, looking at the matter from the obverse point of view, there are many English journalists who find living in Paris so cheap, who are able to represent so many English papers in Paris as special correspondents, contributing at the same time, too, a number of general articles to other magazines, that they are able to reckon a larger bank balance at the end of the year than if they had been engaged in English journalism in London. But the appointment to such posts depends on the possession of qualities which time and experience, apart from natural aptitude, alone can bring.





# METHOD OF MARKING ADOPTED BY PRINTERS

WITH SPECIMEN OF CORRECTED PAGE  
AND SYNOPSIS OF MARKS

*Reprinted from "Printing, a Practical Treatise on the Art of  
Printing," by Chas. T. Jacobi, of the Chiswick Press,  
post 8vo, 7s. 6d. ; and published by  
Messrs. George Bell & Sons*

## Page showing corrections.

□ Do not try to correct the faults of hurried making-ready by  
 a weak impression, and by carrying an excess of ink to hide  
 the weakness. Excess of ink fouls the rollers, clogs the  
 type, and makes the printed work smear or set off. A good *ital*  
 print cannot be had when the impression is so weak that the  
 paper touches (barely) the ink on the types and is not pressed  
 against the types. There must be force enough to transfer *x*  
 the ink not only on to the paper, but into the paper. A firm */ rom*  
 impression should be had, even if the paper be indented.  
 The amount of impression required will largely depend on  
 the making-ready. With careful making-ready, impression *# L*  
 may be light; roughly and hurriedly done, it must be hard, */ x*  
 Indentation is evidence of wear of type. The spring and  
 resulting friction of an elastic impression surface is most felt  
 where there is least resistance—at the upper and lower ends  
 of lines of type, where they begin to round off. It follows  
 that the saving of time that may be gained by hurried and *n/*  
 rough making-ready must be offset by an increased wear of *the /*  
 type. That impression is best for preventing wear of type *hard*  
 which is confined to its surface and never laps over ~~over~~ its *unf.*  
 edges. But this perfect surface impression is possible only  
 on a large forme with new type, sound, ~~soft~~ packing, and  
 ample time for making ready. If types are worn, the in-  
 dentation of the paper by impression cannot be entirely  
 prevented. Good presswork does not depend entirely upon *x*  
 the press or machine, neither on the workman, nor on the *d/*  
 materials. Nor will superiority in any ~~one~~ point compensate *3*  
 for deficiency in another: new type will suffer from a poor *3*  
 roller, and careful making-ready is thrown away if poor ink *!*  
 be used. It is necessary that all the materials shall be  
 good, that they should be adapted to each other and fitly  
 used. A good workman can do much with poor materials,  
 but a neglect to comply with one condition often produces  
 as bad a result as the neglect of all.  
 If the foregoing facts are carefully studied many difficul-  
 ties will be overcome in obtaining really good work. *x*

*Page as corrected.*

Do not try to correct the faults of hurried making-ready by a weak impression, and by carrying an excess of ink to hide the weakness. Excess of ink fouls the rollers, clogs the type, and makes the printed work smear or set off. A *good* print cannot be had when the impression is so weak that the paper barely touches the ink on the types and is not pressed against the types. There must be force enough to transfer the ink not only on to the paper, but into the paper. A firm impression should be had, even if the paper be indented. The amount of impression required will largely depend on the making-ready. With careful making-ready, impression may be light; roughly and hurriedly done, it must be hard; indentation is evidence of wear of type. The spring and resulting friction of an elastic impression surface is most felt where there is least resistance—at the upper and lower ends of lines of Type, where they begin to round off. It follows that the saving of time that may be gained by hurried and rough making-ready must be offset by an increased wear of type.

That impression is the best for preventing wear of type which is confined to its surface and never laps over its edges. But this perfect surface impression is possible only on a large forme with new type, sound, hard packing, and ample time for "making-ready." If types are worn, the indentation of the paper by impression cannot be entirely prevented: good presswork does not depend entirely upon the press or machine, neither on the workman, nor on the materials. Nor will superiority in any point compensate for deficiency in another: new type will suffer from a poor roller, and careful making-ready is thrown away if poor ink be used! It is necessary that all the materials shall be good, that they should be adapted to each other and fitly used. A good workman can do much with poor materials, but a neglect to comply with one condition often produces as bad a result as the neglect of all. If the foregoing facts

## SYNOPSIS OF READERS' MARKS.

- This indicates that the line has to be indented one em of its own body.
- ⊙ A full-stop or full-point has to be inserted.
- Trs.* A transposition of a word or words.
- Ital.* Change roman into *italic*. Also indicated by underlining the word or words to be in *italic*.
- l. c. A capital or small capital to be changed to a lower-case letter.
- Rom.* Change *italic* into roman.
- Cap.* A lower-case or small capital letter to be changed to a capital.
- Sm. Cap.* A lower-case or capital letter to be changed to a small capital.
- × A bad or battered letter.
- Stet.* Matter wrongly altered shall remain as it was. Dots are usually placed under the matter in question.
- ∴ A space has to be inserted.
- └ Space to be reduced.
- ↻ A turned letter.
- New par.* or *n. p.* or [ Commence a fresh line.
- Run on.* Sentence not to commence a new line, but to follow on previous matter.
- ⊘ Delete or expunge.
- ┐ A space or quadrat standing high to be pushed down.
- w.f.* Denotes a wrong-fount letter.
- Equal.* Equalize spacing throughout the line.
- 3 The matter has something foreign between the lines, or a wrong-fount space in the line, causing the types to get crooked.
- 7 When a superior letter or inverted comma is required to be inserted in the matter, it is usually written over this sign.
- ⌒ The words or letters over which this is marked to be joined.



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# COPYRIGHT LAW

A MANUAL FOR AUTHORS, JOURNALISTS,  
ARTISTS, EDITORS, PUBLISHERS,  
AND DRAMATISTS

BY

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